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Taking the Bastille.

THE ROMANCES OF

ALEXANDRE DUMAS

ANGE PITOU

Volume One

The Marie Antoinette Romances

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INTRODUCTORY NOTE.

On Christmas Day, 1753, Lord Chesterfield wrote from Paris, summing up his observations on the state of France: "In short, all the symptoms which I have ever met with in history, previous to great changes and revolutions in government, now exist and daily increase in France."

This, being written so early and by a foreigner, is perhaps the most noteworthy of the prophecies of disaster to come which were trumpeted forth by so many keen-sighted intellects during the last half of the eighteenth century. It was floating in the air; it was written upon the faces of the starving, down-trodden people, who found themselves burdened with this tax and that tax, with tithes and *tailles*, from which the nobility and clergy were exempt; while on the other hand, the luxury and extravagance of those privileged classes grew every day more wanton, and their vices more shameless. Upon such a foundation the philoso-

phers and encyclopædists had built solidly and well, so that Voltaire wrote exultingly of the "glorious sights" which the young men of his day would live to see; wherefore they were greatly to be envied!

The old Marquis de Mirabeau, father of him who became so prominent a figure during the early months of the Revolution, — a curious, crabbed old fellow, who called himself the "friend of men," and whose peculiarities are described by Dumas in the "Comtesse de Charny," — wrote in his memoirs a description of a peasant's holiday which he witnessed in the provinces about the time of the death of Louis XV. (1774). After describing the dance which ended in a battle, and "the frightful men, or rather frightful wild animals, . . . of gigantic stature, heightened by high wooden clogs, . . . their faces haggard and covered with long greasy hair, — the upper part of the visage waxing pale, the lower, distorting itself into the attempt at a cruel laugh and a sort of ferocious impatience," — he moralizes thus: "And these people pay the *taille!* And you want, further, to take their salt from them! And you know not what it is you are stripping barer, or as you call it, governing, — what, by a spurt of your pen, in its cold, dastard indifference, you will fancy you can starve always with impunity.

always till the catastrophe come! Ah, Madame, such government by blindman's-buff, stumbling along too far, will end in a general overturn."

It is curious to notice with what unanimity the good intentions of Louis XVI. are admitted, almost taken for granted, by all writers upon this period, except the virulent pamphleteers of the day. Even Michelet admits it, though somewhat grudgingly,— Michelet, who went out of his way to charge Louis XV., whose load of sin was heavy enough in all conscience, with a foul crime for which there seems to be no shadow of authority.

But it is hard to convince one's self that the general overturn could have been avoided, even had the will and character of the young king been as worthy of praise as his impulses and intentions undoubtedly were. Hastened it was, beyond question, by his weakness at critical moments, by his subserviency to the will of the queen, which was exerted uninterruptedly, and with what now seems like fatal perversity, in the wrong direction, during the years when there was still a chance, at least, of saving the monarchy. It was through the influence of the queen and her intimate circle that step after step, which, if taken in time, would have made a favorable impression upon an impressionable people, "whose nature it was to love their kings," was

delayed until it was, so to say, extorted, and hence bereft of all appearance of a willing, voluntary concession. Numerous instances of this fatality, if we may so call it, are told by Dumas; notably the day's postponement of the king's journey to Paris after the day of the Bastille.

With the virtuous, philosophic Turgot, "who had a whole reformed France in his head," for Controller-General of the Finances, the reign of Louis XVI. seemed to start off under the best of auspices. But, as Carlyle tersely puts it, "Turgot has faculties, honesty, insight, heroic volition, but the Fortunatus's purse he has not. Sanguine controller-general! a whole pacific French Revolution may stand schemed in the head of the thinker, but who shall pay the unspeakable 'indemnities' that will be needed? Alas! far from that; on the very threshold of the business he proposes that the clergy, the *noblesse*, the very parliaments, be subjected to taxes like the people! One shriek of indignation and astonishment reverberates through all the château galleries; . . . the poor king, who had written to him a few weeks ago, 'You and I are the only ones who have the people's interest at heart,' must write now a dismissal, and let the French Revolution accomplish itself, pacifically or not, as it can."

To Turgot succeeded Necker, also a skilful and honest financier, also with schemes of peaceful reform in his head. For five years he carried the burden; and at last he, too, was driven to propose the taxation of clergy and nobility, and thereupon to take his departure, May, 1781.

Under the short administrations of Joly de Fleury and D'Ormesson, matters failed to improve (as indeed, how could they do otherwise?), until on the retirement of the latter, when the king purchased Rambouillet, without consulting him, in the autumn of 1783, "matters threaten to come to a still-stand," says Carlyle.

At such a crisis destiny decreed that M. de Calonne should be put forward to fill the vacancy, — a man of indisputable genius, "before all things, for borrowing."

"Hope radiates from his face, persuasion hangs on his tongue. For all straits he has present remedy, and will make the world roll on wheels before him."

In the "Diamond Necklace," Dumas has given us a faithful picture of Calonne and his method of exploiting his financial genius. His grandiloquent, "Madame, if it is but difficult, it is done; if it is impossible, it shall be done," seems hardly to stamp him as the man for the place at that critical period,

however great may have been the felicity of the Œil-de-Bœuf under the temporary plenty which resulted from the policy of "borrowing at any price."

It would be hard to exaggerate the effect upon the growing aspirations of the French people after the unfamiliar something which they came to call "liberty," of the result of the struggle in America, in which the cause of the colonists was so powerfully supported by the little band of Frenchmen of whom Lafayette was the most prominent and the most notable. He returned to France in 1783, to be dubbed in some quarters "Scipio Americanus."

The scandalous affair of the necklace was, as we have heretofore seen, seized upon by the enemies of the queen as a weapon with which to assail her reputation, although her absolute innocence of any guilty connection with it is now beyond doubt. The results of this unfortunate episode — the "immense rumor and conjecture from all mankind," coupled with the slanderous charges made by Madame Lamotte in a letter from London after her escape from the Salpétrière — went far towards creating the unreasoning hatred of the "Austrian woman," which she herself did so little to assuage when the clouds became blacker than night, and began to emit the thunder and lightning of the Revolution.

In the spring of 1787, Calonne, his borrowing powers being at an end, conceived the idea of convoking the "Notables" — an expedient unheard of for one hundred and sixty years — to sanction his new plan of taxation. They met on the 22d of February, 1787, one hundred and thirty-seven of them, "men of the sword, men of the robe, peers, dignified clergy, parliamentary presidents," with seven princes of the blood to preside over the seven *bureaux*, — "a round gross in all." They would have none of Calonne or his plans; and he was dismissed in April, after which the "Notables" sat until May 25, "treating of all manner of public things," and then first were the States-General mentioned.

Calonne was succeeded by Cardinal Loménie de Brienne, — a dissolute, worthless sexagenarian, who devised various tax-edicts, stamp-taxes, and the like, all of which the Parliament of Paris refused to register. The expedient of a Bed of Justice was resorted to, and resulted in the most ominous of all portents: for the first time in history the Parliament refused to obey the royal "Je veux" (I wish it.) They were exiled for a month, — August to September, 1787, — and returned upon conditions.

In the spring of 1788, Loménie's great scheme of dismissing the parliaments altogether, and sub-

stituting a more subservient "Plenary Court" was detected before it was ripe, and denounced to the Parliament of Paris, which body, upon remonstrating, was again exiled (May). An attempt thereafter to raise supplies by royal edict simply, led to the rebellion of all the provincial parliaments, the public expressing its approval more noisily than ever. On August 8 appeared a royal edict to the effect that the States-General should be convoked for May following; it was followed by another edict, that treasury payments should thenceforth be made three-fifths in cash and two-fifths in paper, — a virtual confession that the treasury was insolvent. Thereupon Loménie was incontinently dismissed, and Necker recalled from Switzerland to become the "Savior of France."

A second convocation of the "Notables" (November 6 to December 12, 1788) undertook to decide how the States should be held: whether the three estates should meet as one deliberative body, or as three, or two; and, most important of all, what should be the relative force, in voting, of the Third Estate, or Commonalty. They separated without settling any of the points in question.

In January, 1789, the elections began, — the real beginning of the French Revolution in the opinion of Carlyle, and indeed, of most writers.

On the 13th of July, 1788, there had been a most destructive hail-storm throughout France, and the growing crops were literally destroyed; whereby the extreme destitution which had come to be the natural condition of the lower classes had been accentuated. In addition, the winter of 1788–89 was one of extreme rigor, so that it seemed almost as if God himself were openly manifesting his will that the general overturn should come.

The riot in which Réveillon, the paper manufacturer, was concerned occurred in April, 1789, just prior to the assembling of the States-General on May 4.

The clergy and nobility at once exhibited their purpose to act as separate bodies; and the Third Estate, led by Mirabeau and others, decided that it must be the mainspring of the whole, and that it would remain "inert" until the other two estates should join with it; under which circumstances it could outvote them and do what it chose. For seven weeks this state of "inertia" endured, until the court decided to intervene and the assembly hall was found closed against the representatives of the people on June 20. Thereupon they met in the old tennis-court (Jeu de Paume), and there the celebrated "Oath of the Tennis-Court" was taken by every man of them but one, — an oath "that they

will not separate for man below, but will meet in all places, under all circumstances, wheresoever two or three can get together, till they have made the Constitution."

One subsequent attempt was made by the king to intimidate this ominously persistent body; but the messenger whom he despatched to command them to separate ("Mercury" de Brézé, Carlyle calls him) was addressed in very plain language by the lion-headed Mirabeau, and retired in confusion. The court recoiled before the spectacle of "all France on the edge of blazing out;" the other two estates joined the Third, which triumphed in every particular. Henceforth the States-General are the "National Assembly," sometimes called the "Constituent Assembly," or assembly met to make the constitution.

This cursory sketch of the leading events of the early years of the reign of Louis XVI. is offered as a sort of supplement to that presented by Dumas before he takes his readers into the "thick of the business" in Paris.

The badly veiled military preparations to which the terror of the queen and the court led the king to consent, kept the Parisian populace in a constant state of fermentation, which was powerfully helped on by the continued scarcity of food and the consequent influx of starving provincials into the

metropolis. The Gardes Françaises gave indubitable symptoms of popular leanings, which perhaps emboldened the effervescent spirits of the mob more than a little.

The news of the dismissal of Necker, circulated on Sunday, July 12, kindled the first panic terror of Paris into a wild frenzy, and resulted in the siege of the Bastille, "perhaps the most momentous known to history."

The course of events immediately preceding the descent upon that "stronghold of tyranny, called Bastille, or 'building,' as if there were no other building," as well as those of the siege itself, is traced with marvellous fidelity by Dumas, due allowance being made, of course, for the necessities of the romance. He closely follows Michelet; but the details are told, with substantial unanimity, by all historians of the fateful event.

The part assigned to Billot in the narrative before us was in reality played by several persons. It was Thuriot, an elector from the Hôtel de Ville, who gained admission to the fortress and investigated its condition; who ascended with De Launay to the battlements and showed himself to the mob to quiet their fears that he had been foully dealt with. This same Thuriot, as president of the convention, refused to allow Robespierre to speak in

his own defence on the 10th Thermidor, year II. (July 28, 1794). It was Louis Tournay, a blacksmith and old soldier of the Regiment Dauphiné, who hacked away the chain which upheld the first drawbridge. It was an unknown man who first essayed to cross the ditch to take the note dictating terms and fell to the bottom (and was killed); but it was Stanislas Maillard who followed and made the passage in safety.

Élie and Hullin, it is needless to say, are historical characters, and worthy of an honorable place in history for their heroic attempts, then and afterwards, to prevent the needless shedding of blood.

The extraordinary thing about the attack on the Bastille is the startling unanimity of the people that it was the first and fittest object of attack. It seems the more extraordinary because, as Michelet has said, it "was by no means reasonable;" for the lower orders had suffered but little from imprisonment in the Bastille.

"Nobody proposed, but all believed and all acted. Along the streets, the quays, the bridges, and the boulevards, the crowd shouted to the crowd: 'To the Bastille! The Bastille!' And the tolling of the tocsin sounded in every ear: *à la Bastille!*

"Nobody, I repeat, gave the impulse. The orators of the Palais Royal passed the time in drawing

up a list of proscriptions, in condemning the queen to death, as well as Madame de Polignac, Artois, Flesselles, the provost, and others. The names of the conquerors of the Bastille do not include one of these makers of motions."

Perhaps we may accept, in the absence of a better, Michelet's explanation of this instinctive action of the mob, as having been caused by the recent publicity given to the experience of one Latude, who was first confined in the Bastille during the reign of Madame de Pompadour, and had since "worn out all their prisons," and had finally reached the "dunghills of Bicêtre," by way of Vincennes and Charenton. He was at last released through the pertinacious efforts of one Madame Legros, a poor mercer, who became interested in him by chance, and persevered for three years, meeting with obstacles of every sort and exposed to the vilest calumny, until success came at last, and Latude was released in 1784, after more than forty years of confinement. His release was followed by an ordinance enjoining intendants never again to incarcerate anybody at the request of families *without a well-grounded reason*, and in every case *to indicate the duration of confinement*, — a decidedly naïve confession of the degree of arbitrariness which had been reached.

"From that day" (of Latude's deliverance), says Michelet, "the people of the town and the faubourg, who, in that much-frequented quarter, were ever passing and repassing in its shadow, never failed to curse it."

It is proper to observe that the state of things which existed in the Bastille when the Cellamare conspirators underwent mock imprisonment there (witness the Regency Romances) had been done away with. While other prisons had become more merciful, this had become more cruel. From reign to reign the privileges were taken away, the windows were walled up one after another, and new bars were added. The other encroachments by De Launay upon the "liberties of the Bastille" are described by Dumas in the course of the narrative.

To quote Michelet once more: "The Bastille was known and detested by the whole world. 'Bastille' and 'tyranny' were in every language synonymous terms. Every nation, at the news of its destruction, believed it had recovered its liberty."

The Comte de Ségur, then ambassador at Russia, relates that when the news arrived in St. Petersburg, men of every nation were to be seen shouting and weeping in the streets, and repeating, as they embraced one another: "Who can help weeping for joy? The Bastille is taken!"

The Duc de Liancourt announced the fall of the fortress to Louis XVI. "Why," said the king, "it is downright revolt!" "It's more than that," replied Liancourt, "it is revolution."

Nothing need be added to the description given by Dumas of the painful excitement at Versailles, or of the king's journey to Paris and experience there. The scenes attending the summary vengeance wreaked upon Foulon and Berthier, who were the very incarnation of the old régime, are also portrayed with the careful attention to detail which is so striking a characteristic of the historical portions of the author's romances; and the same may be said of the assassination of Flesselles, and, by anticipation, of the events of the 5th of October in the streets of Paris and at the Hôtel de Ville, when Stanislas Maillard assumed the leadership of the women ("the Menadic hosts"), and Lafayette was reluctantly compelled to lead the march of the thirty thousand upon Versailles.

The fall of the Bastille was followed throughout France by the enlistment of National Guards, ostensibly, in most instances, as a protection against mythical brigands, whose coming in great numbers was continually heralded in every town and village, but who never came. The experience of Pitou, in Haramont, is typical of the great movement which was in progress everywhere.

"It is a terrible but certain fact," says Michelet, "that in Paris, that city of eight hundred thousand souls, there was no public authority for the space of three months, from July to October."

Meanwhile the National Assembly was going haltingly on with its work of constitution-making. The session of the 4th of August shines out with peculiar prominence, as it was the occasion of all the privileged classes vying with one another in renouncing their privileges. Such good effect as this tardy renunciation might have had, however, was destroyed by the king's refusal to sanction it, except in so far as he was personally affected.

Towards the end of August the knotty question of the veto was duly reached: whether the king should have any veto upon the acts of the Assembly, and if so, whether it should be absolute or suspensive.

Throughout Lafayette assumed a position of great prominence in other directions than as commander-in-chief of the National Guard. The "suspensive" veto was finally decided upon, and there was a vague prospect of a return of quieter times, except for the continued scarcity and dearness of grain. "Our rights of man are voted," says Carlyle; "feudalism and all tyranny abolished; yet behold we stand in queue [at the bakers' doors]! Is it aristo-

crat forestallers — a court still bent on intrigue? Something is rotten somewhere."

With hope, terror, suspicion, excitement, succeeding one another with bewildering rapidity, comes the certainty that the "Œil-de-Bœuf is rallying," that the Flanders regiment has been summoned to Versailles, and that some scheme of flight or repression is in the wind. Then comes the news of the banquet of the 1st of October, — of the appearance of the king and queen, the trampling under foot of cockades, and the announcement of Marie Antoinette the next day, that she was "enchanted with the events of the supper." Of all fatuous performances of mortals foredoomed to destroy themselves, surely that was the most fatuous. It is significant, by the way, of the extreme caution with which the statements of Madame Campan must be accepted, that in describing this scene, at which she was present, she does not mention the word "cockade," nor does she imply that it was aught but a quiet, orderly function, at which, perhaps, some one or two may have imbibed a thought too freely.

With regard to the events of the night of October 5–6 at Versailles, nothing need be said, save that the body-guard who heroically defended the door to the queen's apartments, where Georges de Charny is said to have been slain, was one

Miomandre de Sainte-Marie; and that although "fractured, slashed, lacerated, left for dead, he has crawled to the Œil-de-Bœuf, and shall live honored of loyal France."

In the "Comtesse de Charny" we shall find the king and queen on the road to Paris, on the 6th of October. We shall there meet many old acquaintances and make some new ones, and shall follow the setting sun of the time-honored monarchy of France till it sinks at last below the horizon.

LIST OF CHARACTERS.

Period, 1789.

Louis XVI., King of France.
Marie Antoinette.
Comte d'Artois, } the King's brothers.
Comte de Provence, }
Princesse de Lamballe.
The Dauphin.
Madame Royale.
Louis Philippe Joseph, Duc d'Orléans, afterwards Philippe Égalité.
M. de Calonne, Comptroller-General.
M. de Crosme, Lieutenant of police.
Comte de Launay, Governor of the Bastile.
Comtesse Jules de Polignac, favorite of the Queen.
Diane, Duchesse de Polignac, her sister-in-law.
Madame Campan, waiting-woman to the Queen.
Madame de Tourzel, governess of the royal children.
Marquis de Lafayette, Commander-in-Chief of the National Guards of France,
Baron de Necker.
Madame de Staël, his daughter.
M. Turgot.
Madame Haguë, } attending on the Queen.
Madame Thibault, }
Comte Olivier de Charny, Lieutenant of the Queen's Guards.
Andrée de Taverney, Comtesse de Charny.

BARON GEORGE DE CHARNY, } brothers of Comte de Charny.
VICOMTE ISIDOR DE CHARNY, }

PRINCE DE BEAUVAU, }
M. DE VILLEROY, } gentlemen of the King's household.
M. DE NESLE, }
M. DE VILLEQUIER, }

PRINCE DE CONDÉ, }
PRINCE DE LAMBESQ, }
MARÉCHAL DE BROGLIE, }
COMTE D'ESTAING, }
M. DE DREUX BRÉZÉ, } officers commanding the Royal Troops.
BARON DE BESENVAL, }
M. DE NARBONNE FRITZLAR, }
M. DE SALKENAYM, }
M. DE BIRON, }
M. DE LUSIGNAN, }

M. DE PERSEVAL, aide-de-camp of Comte d'Estaing.

M. DE CLERMONT-TONNERE, }
M. DE SARTINE, }
MARIE DE LAVAL, } friends of Marie Antoinette.
MADAME DE MAGNEVILLE, }
M. DE COIGNY, }

BARON DE BRETEUIL, }
M. DE LA ROCHEFOUCAULT, }
COMTE DE MAUREPAS, } of the French Court.
COMTE DE MACHAUT, }
M. DE BRIENNE, }
M. DE VARICOURT, }

CHEVALIER D'ABZAC, Chief of the Royal Stable.
COUNT CAGLIOSTRO.
DR. HONORÉ GILBERT.
SEBASTIEN GILBERT, his son.
ABBÉ FORTIER, a schoolmaster.
LOUIS ANGE PITOU, one of his pupils, afterwards Commander of the National Guard of Haramont.

Rose Angélique Pitou, Pitou's aunt.
Billot, a farmer of Villers-Cotteret, afterwards leading the attack on the Bastille.
Catherine, his daughter.
Madame Billot.
Camille Desmoulins, } Revolutionists.
Jean Paul Marat, }
Stanislaus Maillard, an usher of the Châtelet Court, }
Madeleine Chambry, a flower-girl, }
Verrière, a deformed dwarf, }
Danton, }
Elie, formerly an officer in the Queen's regiment, } taking part in the attack on the Bastille.
Hullin, a chasseur, }
Gonchon, the "Mirabeau of the People," }
Arne, Challot, and de Lepine, soldiers, }
Gabriel Honoré Mirabeau, } members of the National Assembly.
M. de Sièyes, }
M. Guillotin, M.D., }
M. Monnier, }
M. de Flesselles, Provost of the Merchants of Paris.
M. de Bailly, his successor.
M. de Saint-Priest, minister for Paris.
M. de Foulon.
M. Berthier de Sauvigny, his son-in-law.
Saint-Jean, Foulon's servant.
M. Rappe, syndic.
M. Delavigne, President of the Electors.
M. Rivière, an Elector.
M. Acloque, President of the St. Marcel District.
Abbé Lefèvre d'Ormesson.
Abbé Delille.
Abbé Maury.
Abbé Béradier, Principal of the College of Louis-le-Grand.

Doctor Mesmer.
M. de Losme, Major of the Bastille.
Réveillon, a paper-manufacturer.
Master Farollet, tennis-master-in-chief to Duc d'Orléans.
Pasdeloup, a police agent.
Captain Goudran, of the National Guard.
Sergeant Rigold.
M. Cornu, a hatter.
M. Dulauroy, a tailor.
Father Clovis, a hermit.
M. Furth, a pamphleteer.
Father Lefranc, a farmer.
M. Lonfré, Mayor of Haramont.
Claude Tellier, a woodcutter, Pitou's lieutenant.
Désiré Maniquet, a poacher, Sergeant of Pitou's Company.
Bastien Godinet, one of Pitou's soldiers.
Labbie, a lackey of M. de Flesselles.
Barnaut, a stable-boy on Billot's farm.
Guyon, a turnkey in the Bastille.

Jean Bechade,
Bernard Laroche,
Jean Lacaurège,
Antoine Pujade,
M. de White,
Comte de Solage,
Tavernier,
} prisoners in the Bastille rescued by the people.

ANGE PITOU.

CHAPTER I.

IN WHICH THE READER IS MADE ACQUAINTED WITH THE HERO OF THIS HISTORY, AS WELL AS WITH THE COUNTRY IN WHICH HE FIRST SAW THE LIGHT.

On the borders of Picardy and the province of Soissons, and on that part of the national territory which, under the name of the Isle of France, formed a portion of the ancient patrimony of our kings, and in the centre of an immense crescent formed by a forest of fifty thousand acres which stretches its horns to the north and south, rises, almost buried amid the shades of a vast park planted by Francis I. and Henry II., the small city of Villers-Cotterets. This place is celebrated from having given birth to Charles Albert Demoustier, who, at the period when our present history commences, was there writing his "Letters to Émilie on Mythology," to the unbounded satisfaction of the pretty women of those days, who eagerly snatched his publications from each other as soon as printed.

Let us add, to complete the poetical reputation of this little city, whose detractors, notwithstanding its royal château and its two thousand four hundred inhabitants, obstinately persist in calling it a mere village, — let us

add, we say, to complete its poetical reputation, that it is situated at two leagues' distance from Laferté-Milon, where Racine was born, and eight leagues from Château-Thierry, the birthplace of La Fontaine.

Let us also state that the mother of the author of "Britannicus" and "Athalie" was from Villers-Cotterets.

But now we must return to its royal château and its two thousand four hundred inhabitants.

This royal château, begun by Francis I., whose salamanders still decorate it, and finished by Henry II., whose cipher it bears entwined with that of Catherine de Médicis and encircled by the three crescents of Diana of Poictiers, after having sheltered the loves of the knight-king with Madame d'Étampes, and those of Louis-Philippe of Orleans with the beautiful Madame de Montesson, had become almost uninhabited since the death of this last named prince; his son, Philippe d'Orléans, afterwards called Égalité, having reduced it from the rank of a royal residence to that of a mere hunting rendezvous.

It is well known that the château and forest of Villers-Cotterets formed part of the appanage settled by Louis XIV. on his brother *Monsieur*, when the second son of Anne of Austria married the sister of Charles II., the Princess Henrietta of England.

As to the two thousand four hundred inhabitants of whom we have promised our readers to say a word, they were, as in all localities where two thousand four hundred people are united, a heterogeneous assemblage.

First, of a few nobles, who spent their summers in the neighboring châteaux and their winters in Paris, and who, mimicking the prince, had only a lodging-place in the city.

Secondly, of a goodly number of citizens, who could be seen, let the weather be what it might, leaving their

houses after dinner, umbrella in hand, to take their daily walk, — a walk which was regularly bounded by a wide ditch which separated the park from the forest, situated about a quarter of a league from the town, and which was called, doubtless on account of the exclamation which the sight of it drew from the asthmatic lungs of the promenaders, satisfied at finding themselves, after so long a walk, not too much out of breath, the "Ha! ha!"

Thirdly, of a considerably greater number of artisans, who worked the whole of the week, and only allowed themselves to take a walk on the Sunday; whereas their fellow-townsmen, more favored by fortune, could enjoy it every day.

Fourthly and finally, of some miserable proletarians, for whom the week had not even a Sabbath, and who, after having toiled six days in the pay of the nobles, the citizens, or even of the artisans, wandered on the seventh day through the forest to gather up dry wood or branches of the lofty trees, torn from them by the storm, — that mower of the forest, to whom oak-trees are but as ears of wheat, — and which it scattered over the humid soil beneath the lofty trees, the magnificent appanage of a prince.

If Villers-Cotterets (*Villerii ad Cotiam Retiæ*) had been, unfortunately, a town of sufficient importance in history to induce archæologists to ascertain and follow up its successive changes from a village to a burgh and from a burgh to a city, — the last, as we have said, being strongly contested, — they would certainly have proved this fact, that the village had begun by being a row of houses on either side of the road from Paris to Soissons; then they would have added that its situation on the borders of a beautiful forest having, though by slow degrees, brought to it a great increase of inhabitants, other

streets were added to the first, diverging like the rays of a star and leading towards other small villages with which it was important to keep up communication, and converging towards a point which naturally became the centre, — that is to say, what in the provinces is called The Square, — around which the handsomest buildings of the village, now become a burgh, were erected, and in the middle of which rises a fountain, now decorated with a quadruple dial; in short, they would have fixed the precise date when, near the modest village church — the first want of a people — arose the first turrets of the vast château, the last caprice of a king; a château which, after having been, as we have already said, by turns a royal and a princely residence, has in our days become a melancholy and hideous receptacle for mendicants under the direction of the Prefecture of the Seine.

But at the period at which this history commences, royal affairs, though already somewhat tottering, had not yet fallen to the low degree to which they have fallen in our days; the château was no longer inhabited by a prince, 't is true, but it had not yet become the abode of beggars; it was simply uninhabited, excepting the indispensable attendants required for its preservation; among whom were to be remarked the doorkeeper, the master of the tennis court, and the house steward; and therefore the windows of this immense edifice, some of which looked toward the park and others on a large court aristocratically called the square of the château, were all closed, which added not a little to the gloominess and solitary appearance of this square, at one of the extremities of which rose a small house, regarding which the reader, we hope, will permit us to say a few words.

It was a small house, of which, if we may be allowed to use the term, the back only was to be seen. But, as

is the case with many individuals, this back had the privilege of being the most presentable part. In fact, the front, which was towards the Rue de Soissons, one of the principal streets of the town, opened upon it by an awkwardly constructed gate, which was ill-naturedly kept closed eighteen hours out of the twenty-four, while the back was gay and smiling; that is to say, on the back was a garden, above the wall of which could be seen the tops of cherry, pear, and plum trees, while on each side of a small gate by which the garden was entered from the square was a centenary acacia-tree, which in the spring appeared to stretch out their branches above the wall to scatter their perfumed flowers over the surrounding grounds.

The abode was the residence of the chaplain of the château, who, notwithstanding the absence of the master, performed mass every Sunday in the seignorial church. He had a small pension, and besides this had the charge of two purses, — the one to send a scholar yearly to the college of Plessis, the other for one to the seminary at Soissons. It is needless to say that it was the Orleans family who supplied these purses, — founded, that of the seminary by the son of the Regent, that for the college by the father of the prince, — and that these two purses were the objects of ambition to all parents, at the same time that they were a cause of absolute despair to the pupils, being the source of extraordinary compositions, which compositions were to be presented for approval of the chaplain every Thursday.

Well, one Thursday in the month of July, 1789, a somewhat disagreeable day, being darkened by a storm, beneath which the two magnificent acacias we have spoken of, having already lost the virginal whiteness of their spring attire, shed a few leaves yellowed by the first

heats of summer, after a silence of some duration, bro ken only by the rustling of those leaves as they whirled against each other upon the beaten ground of the square, or by the shrill cry of the martin pursuing flies as it skimmed along the ground, eleven o'clock resounded from the pointed and slated belfry of the town hall.

Instantly a hurrah, loud as could have been uttered by a whole regiment of fusileers, accompanied by a rushing sound like that of the avalanche when bounding from crag to crag, was heard; the door between the two acacia-trees was opened, or rather burst open, and gave egress to a torrent of boys, who spread themselves over the square, when instantly some five or six joyous and noisy groups were formed, — one around a circle formed to keep peg-tops prisoners, another about a game of hop-scotch traced with chalk upon the ground, another before several holes scientifically hollowed out, where those who were fortunate enough to have sous might lose them at pitch and toss.

At the same time that these gambling and playful scholars — who were apostrophized by the few neighbors whose windows opened on this square as wicked do-no-goods, and who, in general, wore trousers the knees of which were torn, as were also the elbows of their jackets — assembled to play upon the square, those who were called good and reasonable boys, and who, in the opinion of the gossips, must be the pride and joy of their respective parents, were seen to detach themselves from the general mass, and by various paths, though with slow steps, indicative of their regret, to walk, basket in hand, towards their paternal roofs, where awaited them the slice of bread and butter, or of bread and preserved fruit, destined to be their compensation for the games they had thus abjured. The latter were, in general, dressed in

jackets in tolerably good condition, and in breeches which were almost irreproachable ; and this, together with their boasted propriety of demeanor, rendered them objects of derision and even of hatred to their worse-dressed and, above all, worse-disciplined companions.

Besides the two classes we have pointed out under the denomination of gambling and well-conducted scholars, there was still a third, which we shall designate by the name of idle scholars, who scarcely ever left school with the others, whether to play in the square or to return to their paternal homes ; seeing that this unfortunate class were almost constantly, what in school language is termed "kept," which means to say, that while their companions, after having said their lessons and written their themes, were playing at top or eating their bread and jam, they remained nailed to their school benches or before their desks, that they might learn their lessons or write their themes during the hours of recreation, which they had not been able to accomplish satisfactorily during the class, when, indeed, the gravity of their faults did not demand a punishment more severe than that of mere detention, such as the rod, the cane, or the cat-o'-nine-tails.

And had any one followed the path which led into the schoolroom, and which the pupils had just used, in the inverse sense, to get out of it, he would, — after going through a narrow alley, which prudently ran outside of the fruit garden and opened into a large yard which served as a private playground, — he would, as we have said, have heard, on entering this courtyard, a loud harsh voice resounding from the upper part of a staircase, while a scholar, whom our impartiality as historians compels us to acknowledge as belonging to the third class we have mentioned, that is to say, to

that of the idle boys, was precipitately descending the said staircase, making just such a movement with his shoulders as asses are wont to do when endeavoring to rid themselves of a cruel rider, or as scholars when they have received a sharp blow from the cat-o'-nine-tails, to alleviate the pain they are enduring.

"Ah! miscreant; ah! you little excommunicated villain," cried the voice, "ah! you young serpent, away with you, off with you; *vade, vade!* Remember that for three whole years have I been patient with you; but there are rascals who would tire the patience of even God himself. But now it is all over. I have done with you. Take your squirrels, take your frogs, take your lizards, take your silk-worms, take your cock-chafers, and go to your aunt, go to your uncle if you have one, or to the devil if you will, so that I never more set eyes upon you; *vade, vade!*"

"Oh, my good Monsieur Fortier, do pray forgive me," replied the other voice, still upon the staircase and in a supplicating tone; "is it worth your while to put yourself into such a towering passion for a poor little barbarism and a few solecisms, as you call them?"

"Three barbarisms and seven solecisms in a theme of only twenty-five lines!" replied the voice, in a rougher and still more angry tone.

"It has been so to-day, sir, I acknowledge; Thursday is always my unlucky day; but if by chance to-morrow my theme should be well written, would you not forgive me my misfortunes of to-day? Tell me, now, would you not, my good Abbé?"

"On every composition day for the last three years you have repeated that same thing to me, you idle fellow, and the examination is fixed for the first of November, and I, on the entreaty of your aunt Angelique, have had

the weakness to put your name down on the list of candidates for the Soissons purse; I shall have the shame of seeing my pupil rejected, and of hearing it everywhere declared that Pitou is an ass, — *Angelus Petovius asinus est.*"

Let us hasten to say — that the kind-hearted reader may from the first moment feel for him all the interest he deserves — that Ange Pitou, whose name the Abbé Fortier had so picturesquely Latinized, is the hero of this story.

"Oh, my good Monsieur Fortier! oh, my dear master!" replied the scholar, in despair.

"I, your master!" exclaimed the abbé, deeply humiliated by the appellation. "God be thanked, I am no more your master than you are my pupil. I disown you, — I do not know you. I would that I had never seen you. I forbid you to mention my name, or even to bow to me. *Retro*, miserable boy, *retro!*"

"Oh, Monsieur l'Abbé," insisted the unhappy Pitou, who appeared to have some weighty motive for not falling out with his master, "do not, I entreat you, withdraw your interest in me on account of a poor halting theme."

"Ah!" exclaimed the abbé, quite beside himself on hearing this last supplication, and running down the first four steps of the staircase, while Ange Pitou jumped down the four bottom ones and made his appearance in the courtyard, — "ah! you are chopping logic when you cannot even write a theme; you are calculating the extent of my patience, when you know not how to distinguish the nominative from the accusative."

"You have always been so kind to me, Monsieur l'Abbé," replied the committer of barbarisms, "and you will only have to say a word in my favor to my lord the bishop."

"Would you have me belie my conscience, wretched boy?"

"If it be to do a good action, Monsieur l'Abbé, the God of mercy will forgive you for it."

"Never! never!"

"And besides, who knows, the examiners perhaps will not be more severe towards me than they were towards my foster-brother, Sebastian Gilbert, when last year he was a candidate for the Paris purse; and he was a famous fellow for barbarisms, if ever there was one, although he was only thirteen years old, and I was seventeen."

"Ah! indeed; and this is another precious stupidity which you have uttered," cried the abbé, coming down the remaining steps, and in his turn appearing at the door with his cat-o'-nine-tails in his hand, while Pitou took care to keep at the prudent distance from his professor which he had all along maintained. "Yes, I say stupidity," continued the abbé, crossing his arms and looking indignantly at his scholar; "and this is the reward of my lessons in logic. Triple animal that you are! it is thus you remember the old axiom, — *Noli minora, loqui majora volens.* Why, it was precisely because Gilbert was so much younger, that they were more indulgent towards a child — a child of fourteen years old — than they would have been to a great simpleton of nearly eighteen."

"Yes, and because he is the son of Monsieur Honoré Gilbert, who has an income of eighteen thousand livres from good landed property, and this on the plain of Pillaleux," replied the logician, in a piteous tone.

The Abbé Fortier looked at Pitou, pouting his lips and knitting his brows.

"This is somewhat less stupid," grumbled he, after a moment's silence and scrutiny. "And yet it is but

specious, and without any basis: *Species, non autem corpus.*"

"Oh, if I were the son of a man possessing an income of eighteen thousand livres!" repeated Ange Pitou, who thought he perceived that his answer had made some impression on the professor.

"Yes, but you are not so, and to make up for it, you are as ignorant as the clown of whom Juvenal speaks, — a profane citation," the abbé crossed himself, "but no less just, — *Arcadius juvenis.* I would wager that you do not even know what *Arcadius* means?"

"Why, Arcadian, to be sure," replied Ange Pitou, drawing himself up with the majesty of pride.

"And what besides?"

"Besides what?"

"Arcadia was the country of donkeys, and with the ancients, as with us, *asinus* was synonymous with *stultus.*"

"I did not wish to understand your question in that sense," rejoined Pitou, "seeing that it was far from my imagination that the austere mind of my worthy preceptor could have descended to satire."

The Abbé Fortier looked at him a second time, and with as profound attention as the first.

"Upon my word!" cried he, somewhat mollified by the incense which his disciple had offered him; "there are really moments when one would swear that the fellow is less stupid than he appears to be."

"Come, Monsieur l'Abbé," said Pitou, who, if he had not heard the words the abbé had uttered, had caught the expression of a return to a more merciful consideration which had passed over his countenance, "forgive me this time, and you will see what a beautiful theme I will write by to-morrow."

"Well, then, I will consent," said the abbé, placing, in sign of truce, his cat-o'-nine-tails in his belt and approaching Pitou, who observing this pacific demonstration, made no further attempt to move.

"Oh, thanks, thanks!" cried the pupil.

"Wait a moment, and be not so hasty with your thanks. Yes, I forgive you, but on one condition."

Pitou hung down his head, and as he was now at the discretion of the abbé, he waited with resignation.

"It is that you shall correctly reply to a question I shall put to you."

"In Latin?" inquired Pitou with much anxiety.

"Latinè," replied the professor.

Pitou drew a deep sigh.

There was a momentary silence, during which the joyous cries of the schoolboys who were playing on the square reached the ears of Ange Pitou. He sighed a second time, more deeply than the first.

"Quid virtus, quid religio?" asked the abbé.

These words, pronounced with all the pomposity of a pedagogue, rang in the ears of poor Ange Pitou like the trumpet of the angel on the day of judgment; a cloud passed before his eyes, and such an effect was produced upon his intellect by it, that he thought for a moment he was on the point of becoming mad.

However, as this violent cerebral labor did not appear to produce any result, the required answer was indefinitely postponed. A prolonged noise was then heard, as the professor slowly inhaled a pinch of snuff.

Pitou clearly saw that it was necessary to say something.

"Nescio," he replied, hoping that his ignorance would be pardoned by his avowing that ignorance in Latin.

"You do not know what is virtue!" exclaimed the

abbé, choking with rage; "you do not know what is religion!"

"I know very well what it is in French," replied Ange, "but I do not know it in Latin."

"Well, then, get thee to Arcadia, *juvenis;* all is now ended between us, pitiful wretch!"

Pitou was so overwhelmed that he did not move a step, although the Abbé Fortier had drawn his cat-o'-nine-tails from his belt with as much dignity as the commander of an army would, at the commencement of a battle, have drawn his sword from the scabbard.

"But what is to become of me?" cried the poor youth, letting his arms fall listlessly by his side. "What will become of me if I lose the hope of being admitted into the seminary?"

"Become whatever you can. It is, by heaven! the same to me."

The good abbé was so angry that he almost swore.

"But you do not know, then, that my aunt believes I am already an abbé?"

"Well, then, she will know that you are not fit to be made even a sacristan!"

"But, Monsieur Fortier —"

"I tell you to depart — *limine linguæ.*"

"Well, then," cried Pitou, as a man who makes up his mind to a painful resolution, but who in fact does make it, "will you allow me to take my desk?" said he to the abbé, hoping that during the time he would be performing this operation a respite would be given him, and the abbé's heart would become impressed with more merciful feelings.

"Most assuredly," said the latter; "your desk, with all that it contains."

Pitou sorrowfully reascended the staircase, for the

schoolroom was on the first floor. On returning to the room — in which, assembled around a large table, and pretending to be hard at work, were seated some fourteen boys — and carefully raising the flap of his desk to ascertain whether all the animals and insects which belonged to him were safely stowed in it, and lifting it so gently that it proved the great care he took of his favorites, he walked with slow and measured steps along the corridor.

At the top of the stairs was the Abbé Fortier, with outstretched arm, pointing to the staircase with the end of his cat-o'-nine-tails.

It was necessary to run the gauntlet. Ange Pitou made himself as humble and as small as he possibly could, but this did not prevent him from receiving, as he passed by, a last thwack from the instrument to which Abbé Fortier owed his best pupils, and the employment of which, although more frequent and more prolonged on the back of Ange Pitou, had produced the sorrowful results just witnessed.

While Ange Pitou, wiping away a last tear, was bending his steps, his desk upon his head, towards Pleux, the quarter of the town in which his aunt resided, let us say a few words as to his physical appearance and his antecedents.

CHAPTER II.

IN WHICH IT IS PROVED THAT AN AUNT IS NOT ALWAYS A MOTHER.

Louis Ange Pitou, as he himself said in his dialogue with the Abbé Fortier, was, at the period when this history commences, seventeen and a half years old. He was a tall, slender youth, with yellow hair, red cheeks, and blue eyes. The bloom of youth, fresh and innocent, was expanded over his wide mouth, the thick lips of which discovered, when extended by a hearty laugh, two perfectly complete rows of formidable teeth, — particularly formidable to those of whose dinner he was about to partake. At the end of his long bony arms were solidly attached hands as large as beetles, legs rather inclined to be bowed, knees as big as a child's head, which regularly made their way through his tight black breeches, and immense feet, which, notwithstanding, were at their ease in calfskin shoes reddened by constant use; such, with a sort of cassock of brown serge, a garment something between a frock-coat and a blouse, is an exact and impartial description of the ex-disciple of the Abbé Fortier.

We must now sketch his moral character.

Ange Pitou had been left an orphan when only twelve years old, the time at which he had the misfortune to lose his mother, of whom he was the only child. That is to say, that since the death of his father, which event had occurred before he had attained the years of recollection, Ange Pitou, adored by his poor mother, had been

allowed to do whatever he thought fit, which had greatly developed his physical education, but had altogether retarded the advancement of his moral faculties. Born in a charming village called Haramont, situated at the distance of a league from the town, and in the centre of a wood, his first walks had been to explore the depths of his native forest, and the first application of his intelligence was that of making war upon the animals by which it was inhabited. The result of this application, thus directed towards one sole object, was, that at ten years old Pitou was a very distinguished poacher, and a bird-catcher of the first order; and that almost without any labor, and above all without receiving lessons from any one, but by the sole power of that instinct given by nature to man when born in the midst of woods, and which would seem to be a portion of that same instinct with which she has endowed the animal kingdom. And therefore every run of hare or rabbit within the circle of three leagues was known to him, and not a marshy pool, where birds were wont to drink, had escaped his investigation. In every direction were to be seen the marks made by his pruning-knife on trees that were adapted to catching birds by imitating their calls. From these different exercises it resulted that in some of them Pitou had attained the most extraordinary skill.

Thanks to his long arms and his prominent knees, which enabled him to climb the largest standard trees, he would ascend to their very summits, to take the highest nests, with an agility and a certainty which attracted the admiration of his companions, and which, in a latitude nearer to the Equator, would have excited the esteem even of monkeys. In that sport, so attractive even to grown people, in which the bird-catcher inveigles the birds to light upon a tree set with limed twigs, by imi-

tating the cry of the jay or the owlet, — birds which, among the plumed tribe, enjoy the bitter hatred of the whole species, and to such an extent that every sparrow, every finch or tomtit, hastens at the call in the hope of plucking out a single feather from the common enemy, and, for the most, leave all their own, — Pitou's companions either made use of a natural owlet or a natural jay, or with some particular plant formed a pipe, by aid of which they managed to imitate indifferently the cry of either the one or the other of these birds. But Pitou disdained all such preparations, despised such petty subterfuges. It was upon his own resources that he relied, it was with his own natural means that he drew them into the snare. It was, in short, his own lips that modulated the shrieking and discordant cries, which brought around him not only other birds, but birds of the same species, who allowed themselves to be enticed, we will not say by this note, but by this cry, so admirably did he imitate it. As to the sport in the marshy pools, it was to Pitou the easiest thing in the world, and he would certainly have despised it as a pursuit of art had it been less productive as an object of profit. But notwithstanding the contempt with which he regarded this sport, there was not one of the most expert in the art who could have vied with Pitou in covering with fern a pool that was too extensive to be completely "laid," — that is the technical term; none of them knew so well as he how to give the proper inclination to his limed twigs, so that the most cunning birds could not drink either over or under them; and finally, none of them had that steadiness of hand and that clear-sightedness which must insure the due mixture, though in scientifically unequal quantities, of the rosin, oil, and glue, in order that the glue should not become either too fluid or too brittle.

Now, as the estimation of the qualities of a man changes according to the theatre on which these qualities are produced, and according to the spectators before whom they are exhibited, Pitou, in his own native village, Haramont, amidst his country neighbors, — that is to say, men accustomed to demand of nature at least half their resources, and, like all peasants, possessing an instinctive hatred of civilization, — Pitou enjoyed such distinguished consideration that his poor mother could not for a moment entertain the idea that he was pursuing a wrong path, and that the most perfect education that can be given, and at great expense, to a man, was not precisely that which her son, a privileged person in this respect, had given, gratis, to himself.

But when the good woman fell sick, when she felt that death was approaching, when she understood that she was about to leave her child alone and isolated in the world, she began to entertain doubts, and looked around her for some one who would be the stay and the support of the future orphan. She then remembered that ten years before, a young man had knocked at her door in the middle of the night, bringing with him a newly born child, to take charge of which he had not only given her a tolerably good round sum, but had deposited a still larger sum for the benefit of the child with a notary at Villers-Cotterets. All that she had then known of this mysterious young man was that his name was Gilbert, but about three years previous to her falling ill he had reappeared. He was then a man about twenty-seven years of age, somewhat stiff in his demeanor, dogmatical in his conversation, and cold in his manner; but this first layer of ice melted at once when his child was brought to him, on finding that he was hale, hearty, and smiling, and brought up in the way in which he had

directed, — that is to say, as a child of nature. He then pressed the hand of the good woman and merely said to her, —

"In the hour of need calculate upon me."

Then he had taken the child, had inquired the way to Ermenonville, and with his son performed the pilgrimage to the tomb of Rousseau, after which he returned to Villers-Cotterets. Then, induced, no doubt, by the wholesome air he breathed there, by the favorable manner in which the notary had spoken of the school under the charge of the Abbé Fortier, he had left little Gilbert with the worthy man, whose philosophic appearance had struck him at first sight; for at that period philosophy held such great sway that it had insinuated itself even among churchmen.

After this he had set out again for Paris, leaving his address with the Abbé Fortier.

Pitou's mother was aware of all these circumstances. When at the point of death, those words, 'In the hour of need calculate upon me,' returned to her recollection. This was at once a ray of light to her; doubtless Providence had regulated all this in such a manner that poor Pitou might find even more than he was about to lose. She sent for the curate of the parish; as she had never learned to write, the curate wrote, and the same day the letter was taken to the Abbé Fortier, who immediately added Gilbert's address, and took it to the post-office.

It was high time, for the poor woman died two days afterwards. Pitou was too young to feel the full extent of the loss he had suffered. He wept for his mother, not from comprehending the eternal separation of the grave, but because he saw his mother cold, pale, disfigured. Then the poor lad felt instinctively that the guardian angel of their hearth had fled; that the house,

deprived of his mother, had become deserted and uninhabitable. Not only could he not comprehend what was to be his future fate, but even how he was to exist the following day. Therefore, after following his mother's remains to the churchyard, when the earth, thrown into the grave, resounded upon her coffin, when the modest mound that covered it had been rounded off, he sat down upon it, and replied to every observation that was made to him as to his leaving it, by shaking his head and saying that he had never left his mother Madeleine, and that he would remain where she remained.

He stayed during the whole of that day and night, seated upon his mother's grave.

It was there that the worthy Doctor Gilbert, — have we not already informed the reader that the future protector of Pitou was a physician? — it was there that the worthy doctor found him, when, feeling the full extent of the duty imposed upon him by the promise he had made, he had hastened to fulfil it, and this within forty-eight hours after the letter had been despatched.

Ange was very young when he had first seen the doctor, but it is well known that the impressions received in youth are so strong that they leave eternal reminiscences. Then the passage of the mysterious young man had left its trace in the house. He had there left the young child of whom we have spoken, and with him comparative ease and comfort; every time that Ange had heard his mother pronounce the name of Gilbert, it had been with a feeling that approached to adoration; then again, when he had reappeared at the house a grown man, and with the title of doctor, when he had added to the benefits he had showered upon it the promise of future protection, Pitou had comprehended, from the fervent gratitude of his mother, that he himself ought also to be grateful, and

the poor youth, without precisely understanding what he was saying, had stammered out the words of eternal remembrance and profound gratitude which had before been uttered by his mother.

Therefore, as soon as he saw the doctor appear at the grated gate of the cemetery, and saw him advancing towards him amid the mossy graves and broken crosses, he recognized him, rose up and went to meet him, for he understood that to the person who had thus come on being called for by his mother he could not say no, as he had done to others; he therefore made no further resistance than that of turning back to give a last look at the grave, when Gilbert took him by the hand and gently drew him away from the gloomy enclosure. An elegant cabriolet was standing at the gate; he made the poor child get into it, and for the moment leaving the house of Pitou's mother under the guardianship of public faith and the interest which misfortune always inspires, he drove his young *protégé* to the town and alighted with him at the best inn, which at that time was called The Dauphin. He was scarcely installed there when he sent for a tailor, who, having been forewarned, brought with him a quantity of ready-made clothes. He with due precaution selected for Pitou garments which were too long for him by two or three inches, — a superfluity which, from the rate at which our hero was growing, promised not to be of long duration. After this he walked with him towards that quarter of the town which we have designated, and which was called Pleux.

The nearer Pitou approached this quarter, the slower did his steps become, for it was evident that he was about to be conducted to the house of his aunt Angélique; and notwithstanding that he had but seldom seen his god-

mother, — for it was Aunt Angélique who had bestowed on Pitou his poetical Christian name, — he had retained a very formidable remembrance of his respectable relative.

And in fact there was nothing about Aunt Angélique that could be in any way attractive to a child accustomed to all the tender care of maternal solicitude. Aunt Angélique was at that time an old maid between fifty-five and fifty-eight years of age, stultified by the most minute practices of religious bigotry, and in whom an ill-understood piety had inverted every charitable, merciful, and humane feeling, to cultivate in their stead an unnatural thirst for malicious gossip, which was increased day by day from her constant intercourse with the bigoted old gossips of the town. She did not precisely live on charity; but besides the sale of the thread she spun upon her wheel, and the letting out of chairs in the church, which office had been granted to her by the chapter, she from time to time received from pious souls, who allowed themselves to be deceived by her pretensions to religion, small sums, which from their original copper she converted into silver, and then from silver into golden louis, which disappeared not only without any person seeing them disappear, but without any one ever suspecting their existence, and which were buried, one by one, in the cushion of the arm-chair upon which she sat at work; and when once in this hiding-place, they rejoined by degrees a certain number of their fellow-coins, which had been gathered one by one, and like them destined thenceforth to be sequestered from circulation until the unknown day of the death of the old maid should place them in the hands of her heir.

It was, then, towards the abode of this venerable relation that Doctor Gilbert was advancing, leading the great Pitou by the hand.

We say the great Pitou, because from three months after his birth Pitou had been too tall for his age.

Mademoiselle Rose Angélique Pitou, at the moment when her door opened to give ingress to her nephew and the doctor, was in a perfect transport of joyous humor. While they were singing mass for the dead over the dead body of her sister-in-law in the church at Haramont, there was a wedding and several baptisms in the church of Villers-Cotterets, so that her chair-letting had in a single day amounted to six livres. Mademoiselle Angélique had therefore converted her sous into a silver crown, which, in its turn, added to three others which had been put by at different periods, had given her a golden louis. This louis had at this precise moment been sent to rejoin the others in the chair-cushion, and these days of reunion were naturally days of high festivity to Mademoiselle Angélique.

It was at the moment, and after having opened her door, which had been closed during the important operation, and Aunt Angélique had taken a last walk round her arm-chair to assure herself that no external demonstration could reveal the existence of the treasure concealed within, that the doctor and Pitou entered.

The scene might have been particularly affecting, but in the eyes of a man who was so perspicacious an observer as Doctor Gilbert, it was merely grotesque. On perceiving her nephew, the old bigot uttered a few words about her poor dear sister, whom she had loved so much; and then she appeared to wipe away a tear. On his side the doctor, who wished to examine the deepest recesses of the old maid's heart before coming to any determination with respect to her, took upon himself to utter a sort of sermon on the duties of aunts toward their nephews. But by degrees, as the sermon was progressing and the

unctuous words fell from the doctor's lips, the arid eyes of the old maid drank up the imperceptible tear which had moistened them; all her features resumed the dryness of parchment, with which they appeared to be covered; she raised her left hand to the height of her pointed chin, and with the right hand she began to calculate on her skinny fingers the quantity of sous which her letting of chairs produced to her per annum. So that chance having so directed it that her calculation had terminated at the same time with the doctor's sermon, she could reply at the very moment, that whatever might have been the love she entertained for her poor sister, and the degree of interest she might feel for her dear nephew, the mediocrity of her receipts did not permit her, notwithstanding her double title of aunt and godmother, to incur any increased expense.

The doctor, however, was prepared for this refusal. It did not, therefore, in any way surprise him. He was a great advocate for new ideas; and as the first volume of Lavater had just then appeared, he had already applied the physiognomic doctrines of the Zurich philosopher to the yellow and skinny features of Mademoiselle Angélique.

The result of this examination was, that the doctor felt assured, from the small sharp eyes of the old maid, her long and pinched-up nose and thin lips, that she united in her single person the three sins of avarice, selfishness, and hypocrisy.

Her answer, as we have said, did not cause any species of astonishment. However, he wished to convince himself, in his quality of observer of human nature, how far the devotee would carry the development of these three defects.

"But, Mademoiselle," said he, "Ange Pitou is a poor

orphan child, the son of your own brother, and in the name of humanity you cannot abandon your brother's son to be dependent on public charity."

"Well, now, listen to me, Monsieur Gilbert," said the old maid; "it would be an increase of expense of at least six sous a day, and that at the lowest calculation; for that great fellow would eat at least a pound of bread a day."

Pitou made a wry face: he was in the habit of eating a pound and a half at his breakfast alone.

"And without calculating the soap for his washing," added Mademoiselle Angélique; "and I recollect that he is a sad one for dirtying clothes."

In fact, Pitou did sadly dirty his clothes, and that is very conceivable, when we remember the life he had led, climbing trees and lying down in marshes; but we must render him this justice, that he tore his clothes even more than he soiled them.

"Oh, fie, Mademoiselle," cried the doctor, "fie, Mademoiselle Angélique! Can you, who so well practise Christian charity, enter into such minute calculations with regard to your own nephew and godson?"

"And without calculating the cost of his clothes," cried the old devotee most energetically, who suddenly remembered having seen her sister Madeleine busily employed in sewing patches on her nephew's jacket and knee-caps on his small-clothes.

"Then," said the doctor, "am I to understand that you refuse to take charge of your nephew? The orphan who has been repulsed from his aunt's threshold will be compelled to beg for alms at the threshold of strangers."

Mademoiselle Angélique, notwithstanding her avarice, was alive to the odium which would naturally attach to

her if from her refusal to receive her nephew he should be compelled to have recourse to such an extremity.

"No," said she, "I will take charge of him."

"Ah!" exclaimed the doctor, happy to find a single good feeling in a heart which he had thought completely withered.

"Yes," continued the devotee, "I will recommend him to the Augustin Friars at Bourg Fontaine, and he shall enter their monastery as a lay-servant."

We have already said that the doctor was a philosopher. We know what was the meaning of the word philosopher in those days.

He therefore instantly resolved to snatch a neophyte from the Augustin brotherhood, and that with as much zealous fervor as the Augustins, on their side, could have displayed in carrying off an adept from the philosopher.

"Well, then," he rejoined, plunging his hand into his deep pocket, "since you are in such a position of pecuniary difficulty, my dear Mademoiselle Angélique, as to be compelled, from your deficiency in personal resources, to recommend your nephew to the charity of others, I will seek elsewhere for some one who can more efficaciously than yourself apply to the maintenance of your nephew the sum which I had designed for him. I am obliged to return to America. I will, before I set out, apprentice your nephew Pitou to some joiner, or a smith. He shall, however, himself choose the trade for which he feels a vocation. During my absence he will grow bigger, and on my return he will already have become acquainted with his business, and then — why, I shall see what can be made of him. Come, my child, kiss your aunt," continued the doctor, "and let us be off at once."

The doctor had not concluded the sentence when Pitou rushed towards the antiquated spinster; his long arms were extended, and he was in fact most eager to embrace his aunt, on the condition that this kiss was to be the signal, between him and her, of an eternal separation.

But at the words "the sum," the gesture with which the doctor had accompanied them, the thrusting his hand into his pocket, the silvery sound which that hand had incontinently given to a heap of crown-pieces, the amount of which might have been estimated by the tension of the pocket, the old maid had felt the fire of cupidity mount even to her heart.

"Oh," cried she, "my dear Monsieur Gilbert, you must be well aware of one thing!"

"And what is that?" asked the doctor.

"Why, good heaven! that no one in the world can love this poor child half so much as I do."

And entwining her scraggy arms round Pitou's neck, she imprinted a sour kiss on each of his cheeks, which made him shudder from the tips of his toes to the roots of his hair.

"Oh, certainly," replied the doctor; "I know that well, and I so little doubted your affection for him that I brought him at once to you as his natural support. But that which you have just said to me, dear mademoiselle, has convinced me at the same time of your good-will and of your inability, and I see clearly that you are too poor to aid those who are poorer than yourself."

"Why, my good Monsieur Gilbert," rejoined the old devotee, "there is a merciful God in heaven, and from heaven does he not feed all his creatures?"

"That is true," replied Gilbert; "but although he gives food to the ravens, he does not put out orphans

as apprentices. Now, this is what must be done for Ange Pitou, and this, with your small means, would doubtless cost you too much."

"But yet, if you were to give that sum, good Doctor."

"What sum?"

"The sum of which you spoke, the sum which is there in your pocket," added the devotee, stretching her crooked finger toward the doctor's coat.

"I will assuredly give it, dear Mademoiselle Angélique," said the doctor; "but I forewarn you it will be on one condition."

"And what is that?"

"That the boy shall have a profession."

"He shall have one, and that I promise you on the faith of Angélique Pitou, most worthy Doctor," cried the devotee, her eyes riveted on the pocket which was swaying to and fro.

"You promise it?"

"I promise you it shall be so."

"Seriously, is it not?"

"On the truth of the living God, my dear Monsieur Gilbert, I swear to do it."

And Mademoiselle Angélique horizontally extended her emaciated hand.

"Well, then, be it so," said the doctor, drawing from his pocket a well-rounded bag; "I am ready to give the money, as you see. On your side, are you ready to make yourself responsible to me for the child?"

"Upon the true cross, Monsieur Gilbert."

"Do not let us swear so much, dear Mademoiselle, but let us sign a little more."

"I will sign, Monsieur Gilbert, I will sign."

"Before a notary?"

"Before a notary."

"Well, then, let us go at once to Papa Niguet."

Papa Niguet, to whom, thanks to his long acquaintance with him, the doctor applied this friendly title, was, as those know who are familiar with our work entitled "Joseph Balsamo," the notary of greatest reputation in the town.

Mademoiselle Angélique, of whom Master Niguet was also the notary, had no objection to offer to the choice made by the doctor. She followed him therefore to the notary's office. There the scrivener registered the promise made by Mademoiselle Rose Angélique Pitou, to take charge of and to place in the exercise of an honorable profession Louis Ange Pitou, her nephew, and so doing should annually receive the sum of two hundred livres. The contract was made for five years. The doctor deposited eight hundred livres in the hands of the notary; the other two hundred were to be paid to Mademoiselle Angélique in advance.

The following day the doctor left Villers-Cotterêts after having settled some accounts with one of his farmers, with regard to whom we shall speak hereafter; and Mademoiselle Pitou, pouncing like a vulture upon the aforesaid two hundred livres payable in advance, deposited eight golden louis in the cushion of her arm-chair.

As to the eight livres which remained, they waited, in a small delf saucer which had, during the last thirty or forty years, been the receptacle of clouds of coins of every description, until the harvest of the following two or three Sundays had made up the sum of twenty-four livres, on attaining which, as we have already stated, the above-named sum underwent the golden metamorphosis, and passed from the saucer into the arm-chair.

CHAPTER III.

ANGE PITOU AT HIS AUNT'S.

We have observed the very slight degree of inclination which Ange Pitou felt towards a long-continued sojourn with his Aunt Angélique; the poor child, endowed with instinct equal to, and perhaps superior to, that of the animals against whom he continually made war, had divined at once, we will not say all the disappointments — we have seen that he did not for a single moment delude himself upon the subject — but all the vexations, tribulations, and annoyances to which he would be exposed.

In the first place — but we must admit that this was by no means the reason which most influenced Pitou to dislike his aunt — Doctor Gilbert having left Villers-Cotterêts, there never was a word said about placing the child as an apprentice. The good notary had indeed given her a hint or two with regard to her formal obligation; but Mademoiselle Angélique had replied that her nephew was very young, and above all, that his health was too delicate to be subjected to labor which would probably be beyond his strength. The notary, on hearing this observation, had in good faith admired the kindness of heart of Mademoiselle Pitou, and had deferred taking any steps as to the apprenticeship until the following year. There was no time lost, the child being then only in his twelfth year.

Once installed at his aunt's, and while the latter was ruminating as to the mode she should adopt whereby to

make the most of her dear nephew, Pitou, who once more found himself in his forest, or very near to it, had already made his topographical observations in order to lead the same life at Villers-Cotterêts as at Haramont.

In fact, he had made a circuit of the neighborhood, in which he had convinced himself that the best pools were those on the road to Dampleux, that to Compiègne and that to Vivières, and that the best district for game was that of the Wolf's Heath.

Pitou, having made this survey, took all the necessary measures for pursuing his juvenile sport.

The thing most easy to be procured, as it did not require any outlay of capital, was bird-lime; the bark of the holly, brayed in a mortar and steeped in water, gave the lime; and as to the twigs to be limed, they were to be found by thousands on every birch-tree in the neighborhood. Pitou therefore manufactured, without saying a word to any one on the subject, a thousand of limed twigs and a pot of glue of the first quality; and one fine morning, after having the previous evening taken on his aunt's account at the baker's a four-pound loaf, he set off at daybreak, remained out the whole day, and returned home when the evening had closed in.

Pitou had not formed such a resolution without duly calculating the effect it would produce. He had foreseen a tempest. Without possessing the wisdom of Socrates, he knew the temper of his Aunt Angélique as well as the illustrious tutor of Alcibiades knew that of his wife Xantippe.

Pitou had not deceived himself in his foresight, but he thought he would be able to brave the storm by presenting to the old devotee the produce of his day's sport; only he had not been able to foretell from what spot the thunder would be hurled at him.

The thunderbolt struck him immediately on entering the house.

Mademoiselle Angélique had ensconced herself behind the door, that she might not miss her nephew as he entered, so that at the very moment he ventured to put his foot into the room, he received a cuff upon the occiput, and in which, without further information, he at once recognized the withered hand of the old devotee.

Fortunately, Pitou's head was a tolerably hard one, and although the blow had scarcely staggered him, he pretended, in order to mollify his aunt, whose anger had increased, from having hurt her fingers in striking with such violence, to fall, stumbling as he went, at the opposite end of the room; there, seated on the floor, and seeing that his aunt was returning to the assault, her distaff in her hand, he hastened to draw from his pocket the talisman on which he had relied to allay the storm, and obtain pardon for his flight. And this was two dozen of birds, among which were a dozen redbreasts and half-a-dozen thrushes.

Mademoiselle Angélique, perfectly astounded, opened her eyes widely, continuing to scold for form's sake; but although still scolding, she took possession of her nephew's sport, retreating three paces towards the lamp.

"What is all this?" she asked.

"You must see clearly enough, my dear little Aunt Angélique," replied Pitou, "that they are birds."

"Good to eat?" eagerly inquired the old maid, who, in her quality of devotee, was naturally a great eater.

"Good to eat!" reiterated Pitou; "well, that is singular. Redbreasts and thrushes good to eat! I believe they are, indeed!"

"And where did you steal these birds, you little wretch?"

"I did not steal them; I caught them."

"Caught them! how?"

"By lime-twigging them."

"Lime-twigging, — what do you mean by that?"

Pitou looked at his aunt with an air of astonishment; he could not comprehend that the education of any person in existence could have been so neglected as not to know the meaning of lime-twigging.

"Lime-twigging?" said he; "why, zounds! 't is lime-twigging."

"Yes; but, saucy fellow, I do not understand what you mean by lime-twigging."

As Pitou was full of compassion for the uninitiated, "Well, you see, Aunt," said he, "in the forest here there are at least thirty small pools; you place the lime twigs around them, and when the birds go to drink there, as they do not — poor silly things! — know anything about them, they run their heads into them and are caught."

"By what?"

"By the birdlime."

"Ah! ah!" exclaimed Aunt Angélique, "I understand; but who gave you the money?"

"Money!" cried Pitou, astonished that any one could have believed that he had ever possessed a sou; "money, Aunt Angélique?"

"Yes."

"No one."

"But where did you buy the birdlime, then?"

"I made it myself."

"And the lime-twigs?"

"I made them also, to be sure."

"Therefore, these birds — "

"Well, Aunt?"

"Cost you nothing?"

"The trouble of stooping to pick them up."

"And can you go often to these pools?"

"One might go every day."

"Good!"

"Only, it would not do."

"What would not do?"

"To go there every day."

"And for what reason?"

"Why, because it would ruin it."

"Ruin what?"

"The lime-twigging. You understand, Aunt Angélique, that the birds which are caught —"

"Well?"

"Well, they can't return to the pool."

"That is true," said the aunt.

This was the first time, since Pitou had lived with her, that Aunt Angélique had allowed her nephew was in the right, and this unaccustomed approbation perfectly delighted him.

"But," said he, "the days that one does not go to the pools one goes somewhere else. The days we do not catch birds, we catch something else."

"And what do you catch?"

"Why, we catch rabbits."

"Rabbits?"

"Yes; we eat the rabbits and sell their skins. A rabbit-skin is worth two sous."

Aunt Angélique gazed at her nephew with astonished eyes; she had never considered him so great an economist. Pitou had suddenly revealed himself.

"But will it not be my business to sell the skins?"

"Undoubtedly," replied Pitou; "as Mamma Madeleine used to do."

It had never entered the mind of the boy that he could

claim any part of the produce of his sport excepting that which he consumed.

"And when will you go out to catch rabbits?"

"Ah! that 's another matter; when I can get the wires," replied Pitou.

"Well, then, make the wires."

Pitou shook his head.

"Why, you made the birdlime and the twigs."

"Oh, yes, I can make birdlime and I can set the twigs, but I cannot make brass wire; that is bought ready made at the grocer's."

"And how much does it cost?"

"Oh, for four sous," replied Pitou, calculating upon his fingers, "I could make at least two dozen."

"And with two dozen how many rabbits could you catch?"

"That is as it may happen,— four, five, six perhaps,— and they can be used over and over again if the game-keeper does not find them."

"See, now, here are four sous," said Angélique; "go and buy some brass wire at Monsieur Dambrun's, and go to-morrow and catch rabbits."

"I will lay them to-morrow," said Pitou, "but it will only be the next morning that I shall know whether I have caught any."

"Well, be it so; but go and buy the wire."

Brass wire was cheaper at Villers-Cotterets than in the country, seeing that the grocers at Haramont purchased their supplies in the town; Pitou, therefore, bought wire enough for twenty-four snares for three sous. He took the remaining sou back to his aunt.

This unexpected probity in her nephew almost touched the heart of the old maid. For a moment she had the idea, the intention, of bestowing upon her nephew the

sou which he had not expended ; unfortunately for Pitou, it was one that had been beaten out with a hammer, and which, in the dusk, might be passed for a two-sous piece. Mademoiselle Angélique thought it would never do to dispossess herself of a coin by which she could make cent per cent, and she let it drop again into her pocket.

Pitou had remarked this hesitation, but had not analyzed it ; he never could have imagined that his aunt would give him a sou.

He at once set to work to make his wires. The next day he asked his aunt for a bag.

"What for?" inquired the old maid.

"Because I want it," replied Pitou. — Pitou was full of mystery.

Mademoiselle Angélique gave him the required bag, put into it the provision of bread and cheese which was to serve for breakfast and dinner to her nephew, who set out very early for Wolf's Heath.

As to Aunt Angélique, she set to work to pick the twelve redbreasts which she had destined for her own breakfast and dinner. She carried two thrushes to the Abbé Fortier, and sold the remaining four to the host of the Golden Ball, who paid her three sous apiece for them, promising her to take as many as she would bring him at the same price.

Aunt Angélique returned home transported with joy. The blessing of heaven had entered beneath her roof with Ange Pitou.

"Ah!" cried she, while eating her robin-redbreasts, which were as fat as ortolans and as delicate as beccaficos, "people are right in saying that a good deed never goes unrewarded."

In the evening Ange returned ; his bag, which was

magnificently rounded, he carried on his shoulders. On this occasion Aunt Angélique did not waylay him behind the door, but waited for him on the threshold, and instead of giving him a box on the ear, she received the lad with a grimace which very much resembled a smile.

"Here I am!" cried Pitou, on entering the room with all that firmness which denotes a conviction of having well employed one's time.

"You and your bag," said Aunt Angélique.

"I and my bag," said Pitou

"And what have you in your bag?" inquired Aunt Angélique, stretching forth her hand with curiosity.

"Beech-mast," said Pitou.[1]

"Beech-mast!"

"Undoubtedly; you must understand, Aunt Angélique, that if old Father La Jeunesse, the gamekeeper at the Wolf's Heath, had seen me prowling over his grounds without my bag, he would have said to me, 'What do you come here after, you little vagabond?' And this without calculating that he might have suspected something; while having my bag, were he to ask me what I was doing there, I should say to him, 'why I am come to gather mast; is it forbidden to gather mast?' 'No.' 'Well, then, if it is not forbidden, you have nothing to say.' And indeed, should he say anything, Father La Jeunesse would be in the wrong."

[1] Beech-mast, we must inform our readers who are less acquainted with forest terms than we are, is the fruit of the beech-tree. This fruit, of which a very good sort of oil is made, is, to the poor, a species of manna, which during two months of the year falls for them from heaven.

[Dumas should also have told his readers that beech-mast is excellent for pigs, and that pheasants, and indeed most kinds of game, are very fond of it. — TRANSLATOR.]

"Then you have spent your whole day in gathering mast instead of laying your wires, you idle fellow!" exclaimed aunt Angélique angrily, who thought that the rabbits were escaping her through her nephew's excessive cunning.

"On the contrary, I laid my snares while he saw me at work gathering the mast."

"And did he say nothing to you?"

"Oh, yes, he said to me, 'You will present my compliments to your aunt, Pitou.' Hey! Is not Father La Jeunesse a kind, good man?"

"But the rabbits?" again repeated the old devotee, whom nothing could divert from her fixed idea.

"The rabbits? Why, the moon will rise at midnight, and at one o'clock I will go and see if there are any caught."

"Where?"

"In the woods."

"How! would you go into the woods at one o'clock in the morning?"

"To be sure."

"And without being afraid?"

"Afraid! of what?"

Angélique was as much astounded at Pitou's courage as she had been astonished at his calculations.

The fact is, that Pitou, as simple as a child of nature, knew nothing of those factitious dangers which terrify children born in cities.

Therefore at midnight he went his way, walking along the churchyard wall without once looking back. The innocent youth who had never offended, at least according to his ideas of independence, either God or man, feared not the dead more than he did the living.

There was only one person of whom he felt any sort of

apprehension, and this was Father La Jeunesse; and therefore did he take the precaution to go somewhat out of his way to pass by his house. As the doors and shutters were all closed, and there was no light to be perceived, Pitou, in order to assure himself that the keeper was really at home and not upon the watch, began to imitate the barking of a dog, and so perfectly that Ronflot, the keeper's terrier, was deceived by it, and answered it by giving tongue with all his might, and by sniffing the air under the door.

From that moment Pitou was perfectly reassured; as Ronflot was at home, Father La Jeunesse must be there also. Ronflot and Father La Jeunesse were inseparable; and at the moment the one was seen, it was certain that the other would soon make his appearance.

Pitou, being perfectly satisfied of this fact, went on towards the Wolf's Heath. The snares had done their work; two rabbits had been caught and strangled.

Pitou put them into the capacious pocket of that coat, which, then too long for him, was destined within a year to become too short, and then returned to his aunt's house.

The old maid had gone to bed, but her cupidity had kept her awake; like Perrette, she had been calculating what her rabbit-skins might produce, and this calculation had led her on so far, that she had not been able to close her eyes; and therefore was it with nervous tremulation that she asked the boy what success he had had.

"A couple," said he. "Ah! the deuce! Aunt Angélique, it is not my fault that I have not brought more, but it appears that Father Jeunesse's rabbits are of a cunning sort."

The hopes of Aunt Angélique were fulfilled, and even more. She seized, trembling with joy, the two unlucky

quadrupeds and examined their skins, which had remained intact, and locked them up in her meat-safe, which never had seen such provisions as those it had contained since Pitou had hit upon the idea of supplying it.

Then, in a very honeyed tone, she advised Pitou to go to bed, which the lad, who was much fatigued, did instantly, and that without even asking for his supper, which raised him greatly in the opinion of his aunt.

Two days after this Pitou renewed his attempts, and on this occasion was more fortunate than the first. He brought home three rabbits. Two of them took the road to the Golden Ball, and the third that of the presbytery. Aunt Angélique was very attentive to the Abbé Fortier, who on his side strongly recommended her to the pious souls of the parish.

Things went on in this manner during three or four months. Aunt Angélique was enchanted, and Pitou found his position somewhat supportable. In fact, with the exception of the tender cares of his mother, Pitou led nearly the same life at Villers-Cotterets which he had done at Haramont. But an unexpected circumstance, which, however, might have been foreseen, at once dashed to the ground the milk-pitcher of the aunt and put a stop to the excursions of the nephew.

A letter had been received from Doctor Gilbert, dated from New York. On placing his foot on the soil of the United States the philosophic traveller had not forgotten his protégé. He had written to Master Niguet, the notary, to inquire whether his instructions had been carried into effect, and to claim the execution of the agreement if they had not been, or to cancel it altogether if the old aunt would not abide by her engagements.

The case was a serious one; the responsibility of the public officer was at stake; he presented himself at the

house of Aunt Pitou, and with the doctor's letter in his hand called upon her to perform the promise she had made.

There was no backing out; all allegations as to ill-health were at once belied by the physical appearance of Pitou. Pitou was tall and thin. Every sapling of the forest was also thin and tall, but this did not prevent it from being in a perfectly healthy and thriving condition.

Mademoiselle Angélique asked for a delay of eight days, in order to make up her mind as to the trade or occupation in which she should place her nephew.

Pitou was quite as sorrowful as his aunt. The mode of life he led appeared to him a very excellent one, and he did not desire any other.

During these eight days there was no thought of going bird-catching or poaching; moreover, the winter had arrived, and in winter the birds find water everywhere; but some snow had fallen, and while that was on the ground Pitou did not dare go out to lay his snares. Snow retains the impression of footsteps, and Pitou possessed a pair of feet so huge that they gave Father La Jeunesse the greatest possible chance of ascertaining in four-and-twenty hours who was the skilful poacher who had depopulated his rabbit warren.

During these eight days the claws of the old maid again showed themselves. Pitou had once more found the aunt of former days, she who had caused him so much terror, and whom self-interest, the *primum mobile* of her whole life, had for a while rendered as smooth as velvet.

As the day for the important decision approached, the temper of the old maid became more and more crabbed, and to such a degree that, about the fifth day, Pitou sin-

cerely desired that his aunt would immediately decide upon some trade, be it what it might, provided it should no longer be that of the scolded drudge which he had been filling in the old maid's house.

Suddenly a sublime idea struck the mind of the old woman who had been so cruelly agitated. This idea restored her equanimity, which for six days had altogether abandoned her.

This idea consisted in entreating the Abbé Fortier to receive into his school, and this without any remuneration whatever, poor Pitou, and enable him to obtain the purse for entering the seminary, founded by his highness the Duke of Orleans. This was an apprenticeship which would cost nothing to Aunt Angélique; and Monsieur Fortier, without taking into calculation the thrushes, blackbirds, and rabbits with which the old devotee had so abundantly supplied him for the last month, was bound to do something, more than for any other, for the nephew of the chair-letter of his own church. Thus kept as under a glass frame, Ange would continue to be profitable to her at the present time, and promised to be much more so in the future.

Consequently Ange was received into the Abbé Fortier's school without any charge for his education. This abbé was a worthy man, and not in any way interested, giving his knowledge to the poor in mind, and his money to the poor in body. He was, however, intractable on one single point; solecisms rendered him altogether furious, barbarisms would send him almost out of his mind; on these occasions he considered neither friends nor foes, neither poor nor rich, nor paying pupils nor gratuitous scholars; he struck all with agrarian impartiality and with Lacedemonian stoicism, and as his arm was strong, he struck severely.

This was well known to the parents, and it was for them to decide whether they would or would not send their sons to the Abbé Fortier's school; or if they did send them there, they knew they must abandon them entirely to his mercy, for when any maternal complaint was made to him, the abbé always replied to it by this device, which he had engraved on the handle of his cane and on that of his cat-o'-nine-tails, "Who loves well chastises well."

Upon the recommendation of his aunt, Ange Pitou was therefore received by the Abbé Fortier. The old devotee, quite proud of this reception, — which was much less agreeable to Pitou, whose wandering and independent mode of life it altogether destroyed, — presented herself to Master Niguet, and told him that she had not only conformed to her agreement with Doctor Gilbert, but had even gone beyond it. In fact, Doctor Gilbert had demanded for Ange Pitou an honorable means of living, and she gave him much more than this, since she gave him an excellent education. And where was it that she gave him this education? Why, in the very academy in which Sebastian Gilbert received his, and for which he paid no less than fifty livres per month.

It was indeed true that Ange Pitou received his education *gratis;* but there was no necessity whatever for letting Doctor Gilbert into this secret. And if he should discover it, the impartiality and the disinterestedness of the Abbé Fortier were well known; as his sublime Master, he stretched out his arms, saying, "Suffer little children to come unto me;" only the two hands affixed to these two paternal arms were armed, the one with a Latin grammar, and the other with a large birch rod; so that in the greater number of instances, instead of, like the Saviour, receiving the children weeping and sending

them away consoled, the Abbé Fortier saw the children approach him with terror in their countenances and sent them away weeping.

The new scholar made his entrance into the schoolroom with an old trunk under his arm, a horn inkstand in his hand, and two or three stumps of pens stuck behind his ears. The old trunk was intended to supply, as it best might, the absence of a regular desk. The inkstand was a gift from the grocer, and Mademoiselle Angélique had picked up the stumps of pens at Monsieur Niguet, the notary's, when she had paid him a visit the evening before.

Ange Pitou was welcomed with that fraternal gentleness which is born in children and perpetuated in grown men, — that is to say, with hootings. The whole time devoted to the morning class was passed in making game of him. Two of the scholars were kept for laughing at his yellow hair, and two others for ridiculing his marvellous knees, of which we have already slightly made mention. The two latter had said that each of Pitou's legs looked like a well-rope in which a knot had been tied. This jest was attended with great success, had gone round the room and excited general hilarity, and consequently the susceptibility of the Abbé Fortier.

Therefore, the account being made up at noon when about to leave the school, — that is to say, after having remained four hours in class, — Pitou, without having addressed a single word to any one, without having done anything but gape behind his trunk, Pitou had made six enemies in the school; six enemies, so much the more inveterate that he had not inflicted any wrong upon them, and therefore did they over the fire-stove, which in the schoolroom represented the altar of their country, swear a solemn oath, some to tear out his yellow hair, others to

punch out his earthenware blue eyes, and the remainder to straighten his crooked knees.

Pitou was altogether ignorant of these hostile intentions. As he was going out he asked a boy near him why six of their comrades remained in school, when all the rest were leaving it.

The boy looked askance at Pitou, called him a shabby tale-bearer, and went away, unwilling to enter into conversation with him.

Pitou asked himself how it could have happened that he, not having uttered a single word during the whole time, could be called a shabby tale-bearer. But while the class had lasted he had heard so many things said, either by the pupils or by the Abbé Fortier, which he could in no way comprehend, that he classed this accusation of his schoolfellow with those things which were too elevated for him to understand.

On seeing Pitou return at noon, Aunt Angélique, with great ardor for the success of an education for which it was generally understood she made great sacrifices, inquired of him what he had learned.

Pitou replied that he had learned to remain silent. The answer was worthy of a Pythagorean; only a Pythagorean would have made it by a sign.

The new scholar returned to school at one o'clock without too much repugnance. The hours of study in the morning had been passed by the pupils in examining the physical appearance of Pitou; those of the afternoon were employed by the professor in examining his moral capabilities. This examination being made, the Abbé Fortier remained convinced that Pitou had every possible disposition to become a Robinson Crusoe, but very little chance of ever becoming a Fontenelle or a Bossuet.

During the whole time that the class lasted, and which

was much more fatiguing to the future seminarist than that of the morning, the scholars who had been punished on account of him repeatedly shook their fists at him. In all countries, whether blessed with civilization or not, this demonstration is considered as a sign of threat. Pitou therefore determined to be on his guard.

Our hero was not mistaken. On leaving, or rather when he had left, and got clear away from all the dependencies of the collegiate house, it was notified to Pitou by the six scholars who had been kept in the morning, that he would have to pay for the two hours of arbitrary detention, with damages, interest and capital.

Pitou at once understood that he would have to fight a pugilistic duel. Although he was far from having studied the fifth book of the Æneid, in which young Dares and the old Entellus give proofs of their great skill in this manly exercise before the loudly applauding Trojan fugitives, he knew something of this species of recreation, to which the country people in his village were not altogether strangers. He therefore declared that he was ready to enter the lists with either of his adversaries who might wish to begin, and to combat successively with all his six enemies. This demonstration began to raise the last comer in the consideration of his schoolfellows.

The conditions were agreed on as Pitou had proposed. A circle was soon formed round the place of combat, and the champions, the one having thrown off his jacket, the other his coat, advanced towards each other.

We have already spoken of Pitou's hands. These hands, which were by no means agreeable to look at, were still less agreeable to feel. Pitou at the end of each arm whirled round a fist equal in size to a child's head, and although boxing had not at that time been introduced into France, and consequently Pitou had not

studied the elementary principles of the science, he managed to apply to one of the eyes of his adversary a blow so well directed that the eye he struck was instantly surrounded by a dark bistre-colored circle, so geometrically drawn that the most skilful mathematician could not have formed it more correctly with his compasses.

The second then presented himself. If Pitou had against him the fatigue occasioned by his first combat, on the other side, his adversary was visibly less powerful than his former antagonist. The battle did not last long. Pitou aimed a straightforward blow at his enemy's nose, and his formidable fist fell with such weight that instantly his opponent's two nostrils gave evidence of the validity of the blow by spouting forth a double stream of blood.

The third got off with merely a broken tooth; he received much less damage than the two former. The other three declared that they were satisfied.

Pitou then pressed through the crowd, which opened as he approached with the respect due to a conqueror, and he withdrew safe and sound to his own fireside, or rather to that of his aunt.

The next morning, when the three pupils reached the school, the one with his eye poached, the second with a fearfully lacerated nose, and the third with his lips swelled, the Abbé Fortier instituted an inquiry. But young collegians have their good points too. Not one of the wounded whispered a word against Pitou, and it was only through an indirect channel, that is to say, from a person who had been a witness of the fight, but who was altogether unconnected with the school, that the Abbe Fortier learned, the following day, that it was Pitou who had done the damage to the faces of his pupils, which had caused him so much uneasiness the day before.

And, in fact, the Abbé Fortier was responsible to the parents, not only for the morals, but for the physical state of his pupils. He had received complaints from the three families. A reparation was absolutely necessary. Pitou was kept in school three days: one day for the eye, one day for the bloody nose, and one day for the tooth.

This three days' detention suggested an ingenious idea to Mademoiselle Angélique. It was to deprive Pitou of his dinner every time that the Abbé Fortier kept him in school. This determination must necessarily have an advantageous effect on Pitou's education, since it would naturally induce him to think twice before committing a fault which would subject him to this double punishment.

Only, Pitou could never rightly comprehend why it was that he had been called a tale-bearer, when he had not opened his lips, and why it was he had been punished for beating those who had wished to beat him; but if people were to comprehend everything that happens in this world, they would lose one of the principal charms of life, — that of mystery and the unforeseen.

Pitou was therefore detained three days in school, and during those three days he contented himself with his breakfast and supper.

Contented himself is not the word, for Pitou was by no means content; but our language is so poor, and the Academy so severe, that we must *content* ourselves with what we have.

Only that this punishment submitted to by Pitou, without saying a word of the aggression to which he had been subjected, and to which he had only properly replied, won him the esteem of the whole school. It is true that the three majestic blows he had been seen to deliver

might also have had some little influence on his schoolfellows.

From that time forward the life of Pitou was pretty nearly that of most of the scholars, with this sole difference, that from his compositions being more defective than those of any of the rest, he was kept twice as often as any of his condisciples.

But it must be said there was one thing in Pitou's nature which arose from the primary education he had received, or rather from that which he had not received, — a thing which is necessary to consider as contributing at least a third to the numerous penalties he underwent; and this was his natural inclination for animals.

The famous trunk which his Aunt Angélique had dignified with the name of desk, had become, thanks to its vastness, and the numerous compartments with which Pitou had decorated its interior, a sort of Noah's ark, containing a couple of every species of climbing, crawling, or flying reptiles. There were lizards, adders, ant-eaters, beetles, and frogs, which reptiles became so much dearer to Pitou from their being the cause of his being subjected to punishment more or less severe.

It was in his walks during the week that Pitou made collections for his menagerie. He had wished for salamanders, which were very popular at Villers-Cotterets, being the crest of François I., who had them sculptured on every chimney-piece in the chateau. He had succeeded in obtaining them; only one thing had strongly preoccupied his mind, and he ended by placing this thing among the number of those which were beyond his intelligence; it was, that he had constantly found in the water these reptiles which poets have pretended exist only in fire. This circumstance had given to Pitou, who was a lad of precise mind, a profound contempt for poets.

Pitou, being the proprietor of two salamanders, set to work to find a chameleon; but this time his search was altogether vain, and success did not attend his labors. Pitou at last concluded, from these unfruitful researches, that the chameleon did not exist, or at all events that it existed in some other latitude.

This point being settled, Pitou did not obstinately continue his search for the chameleon.

The two other thirds of Pitou's punishments were occasioned by those accursed solecisms and those confounded barbarisms, which sprang up in the themes written by Pitou as tares do in a field of wheat.

As to Sundays and Thursdays, days when there was no attendance at school, he had continued to employ them in laying his lime-twigs or in poaching; only, as Pitou was still growing taller, as he was already five feet six, and sixteen years of age, a circumstance occurred which somewhat withdrew Pitou's attention from his favorite occupations.

Upon the road to the Wolf's Heath is situated the village of Pisseleu, the same perhaps which gave a name to the beautiful Anne d'Heilly, the mistress of François I.

Near this village stood the farm-house of Father Billot, as he was called throughout the neighborhood, and at the door of this farm-house was standing, no doubt by chance, but almost every time when Pitou passed and repassed, a pretty girl from seventeen to eighteen years of age, fresh-colored, lively, jovial, and who was called by her baptismal name, Catherine, but still more frequently after her father's name, La Billote.

Pitou began by bowing to La Billote; afterwards he by degrees became emboldened, and smiled while he was bowing; then at last one fine day, after having bowed,

after having smiled, he stopped, and although blushing deeply, ventured to stammer out the following words, which he considered as great audacity on his part:

"Good-day, Mademoiselle Catherine."

Catherine was a good, kind-hearted girl, and she welcomed Pitou as an old acquaintance. He was in point of fact an old acquaintance, for during two or three years she had seen him passing and repassing before the farm-gate at least once a week; only that Catherine saw Pitou, and Pitou did not see Catherine. The reason was, that at first when Pitou used to pass by the farm in this manner Catherine was sixteen years old and Pitou but fourteen. We have just seen what happened when Pitou in his turn had attained his sixteenth year.

By degrees Catherine had learned to appreciate the talents of Pitou, for Pitou had given her evidence of his talents by offering to her his finest birds and his fattest rabbits. The result of this was that Catherine complimented him upon these talents, and that Pitou, who was the more sensible to compliments from his being so little habituated to receive them, allowed the charm of novelty to influence him, and instead of going on straightforward, as heretofore, to the Wolf's Heath, he would stop half way, and instead of employing the whole of his day in picking up beech-mast and in laying his wires, he would lose his time in sauntering round Father Billot's farm, in the hope of seeing Catherine, were it only for a moment.

The result of this was a very sensible diminution in the produce of rabbit-skins, and a complete scarcity of robin-redbreasts and thrushes.

Aunt Angélique complained of this. Pitou represented to her that the rabbits had become mistrustful, and that the birds, who had found out the secret of his lime-twigs,

now drank out of hollows of trees, or out of leaves that retained the water.

There was one consideration which consoled Aunt Angélique for this increase in the intelligence of the rabbits and the cunning of the birds, which she attributed to the progress of philosophy, and this was that her nephew would obtain the purse, enter the seminary, pass three years there, and on leaving it would be an abbé. Now, being housekeeper to an abbé had been the constant aim of Mademoiselle Angélique's ambition.

This ambition could not fail of being gratified; for Ange Pitou, having once become an abbé, could not do otherwise than take his aunt for housekeeper, and above all, after what his aunt had done for him.

The only thing which disturbed the golden dreams of the old maid was, when speaking of this hope to the Abbé Fortier, the latter replied, shaking his head: —

"My dear Demoiselle Pitou, in order to become an abbé, your nephew should give himself up less to the study of natural history, and much more to *De viris illustribus*, or to the *Selectæ è profanis scriptoribus*."

"And which means?" said Mademoiselle Angélique, inquiringly.

"That he makes too many barbarisms and infinitely too many solecisms," replied the Abbé Fortier.

An answer which left Mademoiselle Angélique in the most afflicting state of vagueness and uncertainty.

CHAPTER IV.

OF THE INFLUENCE WHICH A BARBARISM AND SEVEN SOLECISMS MAY HAVE UPON THE WHOLE LIFE OF A MAN.

These details were indispensable to the reader, whatever be the degree of intelligence we suppose him to possess, in order that he might comprehend the whole horror of the position in which Pitou found himself on being finally expelled from the school.

With one arm hanging down, the other maintaining the equilibrium of the trunk upon his head, his ears still ringing with the furious vituperations of the Abbé Fortier, he slowly directed his steps towards Pleux, in a state of meditation which was nothing more than stupor carried to the highest possible degree.

At last an idea presented itself to his imagination, and four words, which composed his whole thought, escaped his lips: —

"O Lord! my aunt!"

And indeed what would Mademoiselle Angélique Pitou say to this complete overthrow of all her hopes?

However, Ange Pitou knew nothing of the projects of the old maid, excepting as a faithful dog surmises the intentions of his master, that is to say, by an inspection of his physiognomy. Instinct is a most valuable guide, — it seldom deceives; while reason, on the contrary, may be led astray by the imagination.

The result of these reflections on the part of Ange Pitou, and which had given birth to the doleful exclama-

tion we have given above, was the apprehension of the violent outbreak of discontent to which the old maid would give way on receiving the fatal news. Now, he knew from sad experience the result of discontent in Mademoiselle Angélique. Only upon this occasion the cause of discontent arising from an incalculably important event, the result would attain a degree altogether incalculable.

It was under these terrific impressions that Pitou entered Pleux. He had taken a quarter of an hour to traverse the distance between the great gate at the Abbé Fortier's and the entrance to this street, and yet it was scarcely three hundred yards.

At that moment the church clock struck one; he then perceived that his final conversation with the Abbé Fortier and the slowness with which he had walked had delayed him in all sixty minutes, and that consequently he was half an hour later than the time at which no more dinner was to be had in Aunt Angélique's abode.

We have already said that such was the salutary restraint which Aunt Angélique had added to his being kept in school, and on the wild ramblings of her nephew; it was thus that in the course of a year she managed to economize some sixty dinners at the expense of her poor nephew's stomach.

But this time, that which rendered more uneasy the retarded schoolboy was not the loss of his aunt's meagre dinner, although his breakfast had been meagre enough, for his heart was too full to allow him to perceive the emptiness of his stomach.

There is a frightful torment, well known to a student, however perverse he may be, and this is the illegitimate hiding in some retired corner, after being expelled from college; it is the definitive and compelled holiday which

he is constrained to take advantage of, while his fellow-students pass by him with their books and writings under their arm, proceeding to their daily task. That college, formerly so hated, then assumes a most desirable form; the scholar occupies his mind with the great affairs of themes and exercises, to which he before so little directed his attention, and which are being proceeded with in his absence. There is a great similarity between a pupil so expelled by his professor and a man who has been excommunicated for his impiety, and who no longer has a right to enter the church, although burning with desire to hear a mass.

And this was why, the nearer he approached his aunt's house, his residence in that house appeared the more frightful to poor Pitou. And this was why, for the first time in his life, his imagination pictured to him the school as a terrestrial paradise, from which the Abbé Fortier, as the exterminating angel, had driven him forth, with his cat-o'-nine-tails wielded as a flaming sword.

But yet, slowly as he walked, and although he halted at every ten steps, — halts which became still longer as he approached nearer, — he could not avoid at last reaching the threshold of that most formidable house. Pitou then crossed the threshold with shuffling feet, and mechanically rubbing his hand on the seam of his nether garment.

"Ah, Aunt Angélique, I am really very sick," said he, in order to stop her raillery or her reproaches, and perhaps also to induce her to pity him, poor boy.

"Pshaw!" said Angélique. "I well know what your sickness is; and it would be cured at once by putting back the hands of the clock an hour and a half."

"Oh, good heavens, no!" cried Pitou; "for I am not hungry."

Aunt Angélique was surprised and almost anxious. Sickness equally alarms affectionate mothers and crabbed stepmothers, — affectionate mothers from the dangers caused by sickness, and stepmothers from the heavy pulls it makes upon their purse.

"Well, what is the matter? Come, now, speak out at once," said the old maid.

On hearing these words, which were, however, pronounced without any very tender sympathy, Ange Pitou burst into tears; and it must be acknowledged that the wry faces he made when proceeding from complaints to tears were the most terrifically ugly wry faces that could be seen.

"Oh, my good Aunt," cried he, sobbing, "a great misfortune has happened to me!"

"And what is it?" asked the old maid.

"The Abbé Fortier has sent me away," replied Ange, sobbing so violently that he was scarcely intelligible.

"Sent you away?" repeated Mademoiselle Angélique, as if she had not perfectly comprehended what he said.

"Yes, Aunt."

"And from where has he sent you!"

"From the school."

And Pitou's sobs redoubled.

"From the school?"

"Yes, Aunt."

"What! altogether?"

"Yes, Aunt."

"So there is to be no examination, no competition, no purse, no seminary?"

Pitou's sobs were changed into perfect howlings.

Mademoiselle Angélique looked at him, as if she would read the very heart of her nephew to ascertain the cause of his dismissal.

"I will wager that you have again been among the bushes instead of going to school. I would wager that you have again been prowling about Father Billot's farm. Oh, fie! and a future abbé!"

Ange shook his head.

"You are lying," cried the old maid, whose anger augmented in proportion as she acquired the certainty that the state of matters was very serious. "You are lying. Only last Sunday you were seen in the Lane of Sighs with La Billote."

It was Mademoiselle Angélique who was lying. But devotees have, in all ages, considered themselves authorized to lie, in virtue of that Jesuitical axiom, "It is permitted to assert that which is false, in order to discover that which is true."

"No one could have seen me in the Lane of Sighs," replied Pitou; "that is impossible, for we were walking near the orangery."

"Ah, wretch! you see that you were with her."

"But, Aunt," rejoined Pitou, blushing, "Mademoiselle Billot has nothing to do with this affair."

"Yes, call her mademoiselle, in order to conceal your impure conduct. But I will let this minx's confessor know all about it."

"But, Aunt, I swear to you that Mademoiselle Billot is not a minx."

"Ah! you defend her, when it is you that stand in need of being excused. Oh, yes; you understand each other better and better. What are we coming to, good heaven! and children only sixteen years old."

"Aunt, so far from there being any understanding between me and Catherine, it is Catherine who always drives me away from her."

"Ah! you see you are cutting your own throat; for

now you call her Catherine, right out. Yes, she drives you away from her, hypocrite, when people are looking at you."

"Ho! ho!" said Pitou to himself, illuminated by this idea. "Well, that is true. I had never thought of that."

"Ah, there again!" said the old maid, taking advantage of the ingenuous exclamation of her nephew to prove his connivance with La Billote; "but let me manage it. I will soon put all this to rights again. Monsieur Fortier is her confessor. I will beg him to have you shut up in prison, and order you to live on bread and water for a fortnight; as to Mademoiselle Catherine, if she requires a convent to moderate her passion for you, well, she shall have a taste of it. We will send her to St. Remy."

The old maid uttered these last words with such authority, and with such conviction of her power, that they made Pitou tremble.

"My good aunt," cried he, clasping his hands, "you are mistaken, I swear to you, if you believe that Mademoiselle Billot has anything to do with the misfortune that has befallen me."

"Impurity is the mother of all vices," sententiously rejoined Mademoiselle Angélique.

"Aunt, I again tell you that the Abbé Fortier did not send me away because I was impure; but he has dismissed me because I make too many barbarisms, mingled with solecisms, which every now and then escape me, and which deprive me, as he says, of all chance of obtaining the purse for the seminary."

"All chance, say you? Then you will not have that purse; then you will not be an abbé; then I shall not be your housekeeper?"

"Ah, good heaven, no! dear Aunt."

"And what is to become of you, then?" cried the old maid, in a savage tone.

"I know not," cried Pitou, piteously, raising his eyes to heaven. "Whatever it may please Providence to order," he added.

"Ah! Providence, you say. I see how it is," exclaimed Mademoiselle Angélique. "Some one has been exciting his brain. Some one has been talking to him of these new ideas; some one has been endeavoring to fill him with these principles of philosophy."

"It cannot be that, Aunt; because no one gets into philosophy before having gone through his rhetoric, and I have never yet been able to get even so far as that."

"Oh, yes!—jest—jest! It is not of that philosophy that I am speaking. I speak of the philosophy of the philosophers, you wretch. I speak of the philosophy of Monsieur Arouet; I speak of the philosophy of Monsieur Jean Jacques; of the philosophy of Monsieur Diderot, who wrote 'La Religieuse.'"

Mademoiselle Angélique crossed herself.

"'La Religieuse!'" cried Pitou; "what is that, Aunt?"

"You have read it, wretch!"

"I swear to you, Aunt, that I have not."

"And this is the reason why you will not go into the church."

"Aunt, Aunt, you are mistaken. It is the church that will not admit me."

"Why, decidedly, this child is a perfect serpent. He even dares to retort."

"No, Aunt; I answer, and that is all."

"Oh, he is lost!" exclaimed Mademoiselle Angélique

with all the signs of most profound discouragement, and falling into her favorite arm-chair.

In fact, "He is lost!" merely signified, "I am lost!"

The danger was imminent; Aunt Angélique formed an extreme resolve. She rose as if some secret spring had forced her to her feet, and ran off to the Abbé Fortier to ask him for an explanation, and above all to make a last effort to get him to change his determination.

Pitou followed his aunt with his eyes till she had reached the door, and when she had disappeared, he went to the threshold and watched her walking with extraordinary rapidity towards the Rue de Soissons. He was surprised at the quickness of her movements; but he had no longer any doubt as to the intentions of Mademoiselle Angélique, and was convinced that she was going to his professor's house.

He could therefore calculate on at least a quarter of an hour's tranquillity. Pitou thought of making a good use of this quarter of an hour which Providence had granted to him. He snatched up the remainder of his aunt's dinner to feed his lizards, caught two or three flies for his ants and frogs, then, opening successively a hutch and a cupboard, he set about feeding himself; for with solitude his appetite had returned to him.

Having arranged all these matters, he returned to watch at the door, that he might not be surprised by the return of his second mother.

Mademoiselle Angélique had given herself the title of Pitou's second mother.

While he was watching, a handsome young girl passed at the end of the Pleux, going along a narrow lane which led from the end of the Rue de Soissons to that of the Rue de Lormet. She was seated on a pillion on the back of a horse loaded with two panniers, the one full of fowls,

the other of pigeons. It was Catherine. On perceiving Pitou standing at his door, she stopped.

Pitou blushed as was his wont, then remained with his mouth wide open, looking at her, that is to say, admiring her, — for Mademoiselle Billot was in his eyes the most heavenly sample of human beauty.

The young girl darted a glance into the street, saluted Pitou with a little graceful nod, and continued on her way.

Pitou replied to it, trembling with satisfaction.

This little scene lasted just time enough to occupy the tall scholar's attention, who was quite lost in his contemplation, and continued eagerly gazing at the spot where Mademoiselle Catherine had appeared, so as to prevent him from perceiving his aunt when she returned from the Abbé Fortier, who suddenly seized his hand, turning pale with anger.

Ange being thus startlingly awakened from his sweet dream by that electrical shock which the touch of Mademoiselle Angélique always communicated to him, turned round, and seeing that the enraged looks of his aunt were fixed upon his hand, cast his own eyes down upon it, and saw with horror that it was holding the half of a large round of bread upon which he had apparently spread a too generous layer of butter, with a corresponding slice of cheese.

Mademoiselle Angélique uttered a cry of terror, and Pitou a groan of alarm; Angélique raised her bony hand, Pitou bobbed down his head; Angélique seized a broom-handle which unluckily was but too near her, Pitou let fall his slice of bread-and-butter, and took to his heels without further explanation.

These two hearts now understood each other, and felt that henceforth there could be no communion between them.

Mademoiselle Angélique went into her house and double-locked the door. Pitou, whom the grating noise alarmed as a continuation of the storm, ran on still faster.

From this scene resulted an effect which Mademoiselle Angélique was very far from foreseeing, and which certainly Pitou in no way expected.

CHAPTER V.

A PHILOSOPHICAL FARMER.

Pitou ran as if all the demons of the infernal regions were at his heels, and in a few seconds he was outside the town.

On turning round the corner of the cemetery, he very nearly ran his head against the hind part of a horse.

"Why, good Lord!" cried a sweet voice well known to Pitou, "where are you running to at this rate, Monsieur Ange? You have very nearly made Cadet run away with me, you frightened us both so much."

"Ah, Mademoiselle Catherine!" cried Pitou, replying rather to his own thoughts than to the question of the young girl. "Ah, Mademoiselle Catherine, what a misfortune! great God, what a misfortune!"

"Oh, you quite terrify me!" said the young girl, pulling up her horse in the middle of the road. "What, then, has happened, Monsieur Ange?"

"What has happened!" said Pitou; and then, lowering his voice as if about to reveal some mysterious iniquity, "why, it is, that I am not to be an abbé, Mademoiselle."

But instead of receiving the fatal intelligence with all those signs of commiseration which Pitou had expected, Mademoiselle Billot gave way to a long burst of laughter.

"You are not to be an abbé?" asked Catherine.

"No," replied Pitou, in perfect consternation; "it appears that it is impossible."

"Well, then, you can be a soldier," said Catherine.

"A soldier?"

"Undoubtedly. You should not be in despair for such a trifle. Good Lord! I at first thought that you had come to announce to me the sudden death of your aunt."

"Oh," said Pitou, feelingly, "it is precisely the same thing to me as if she were dead indeed, since she has driven me out of her house."

"I beg your pardon," said Catherine, laughing; "you have not now the satisfaction of weeping for her."

And Catherine began to laugh more heartily than before, which scandalized poor Pitou more than ever.

"But did you not hear that she has turned me out of doors?" rejoined the student, in despair.

"Well, so much the better," she replied.

"You are very happy in being able to laugh in that manner, Mademoiselle Billot; and it proves that you have a most agreeable disposition, since the sorrows of others make so little impression upon you."

"And who has told you, then, that, should a real misfortune happen to you, I would not pity you, Monsieur Ange?"

"You would pity me if a real misfortune should befall me! But do you not, then, know that I have no other resource?"

"So much the better again!" cried Catherine.

Pitou was perplexed.

"But one must eat!" said he; "one cannot live without eating! and I, above all, for I am always hungry."

"You do not wish to work, then, Monsieur Pitou?"

"Work, and at what? Monsieur Fortier and my Aunt Angélique have told me more than a hundred times that I was fit for nothing. Ah! if they had only ap-

prenticed me to a carpenter or a blacksmith, instead of wanting to make an abbé of me! Decidedly, now, Mademoiselle Catherine," said Pitou, with a gesture of despair, "decidedly there is a curse upon me."

"Alas!" said the young girl, compassionately, for she knew, as did all the neighborhood, Pitou's lamentable story. "There is some truth in what you have just now said, my dear Monsieur Ange; but why do you not do one thing?"

"What is it?" cried Pitou, eagerly clinging to the proposal which Mademoiselle Billot was about to make, as a drowning man clings to a willow branch. "What is it; tell me?"

"You had a protector; at least, I think I have heard so."

"Doctor Gilbert."

"You were the schoolfellow of his son, since he was educated, as you have been, by the Abbé Fortier."

"I believe I was indeed, and I have more than once saved him from being thrashed."

"Well, then, why do you not write to his father? He will not abandon you."

"Why, I would certainly do so, did I know what had become of him; but your father perhaps knows this, Mademoiselle Billot, since Doctor Gilbert is his landlord."

"I know that he sends part of the rent of the farm to him in America, and pays the remainder to a notary at Paris."

"Ah!" said Pitou, sighing, "in America; that is very far."

"You would go to America, — you?" cried the young girl, almost terrified at Pitou's resolution.

"Who, I, Mademoiselle Catherine! Never, never! If

I knew where to go, and how to procure food, I should be very happy in France."

"Very happy!" repeated Mademoiselle Billot.

Pitou cast down his eyes. The young girl remained silent. This silence lasted some time. Pitou was plunged in meditations which would have greatly surprised the Abbé Fortier, with all his logic.

These meditations, though rising from an obscure point, had become lucid; then they again became confused, though brilliant, like the lightning whose origin is concealed, whose source is lost.

During this time Cadet had again moved on, though at a walk, and Pitou walked at Cadet's side, with one hand leaning on one of the panniers. As to Mademoiselle Catherine, who had also become full of thought, she allowed her reins to fall upon her courser's neck, without fearing that he would run away with her. Moreover, there were no monsters on the road, and Cadet was of a race which had no sort of relation to the steeds of Hippolytus.

Pitou stopped mechanically when the horse stopped. They had arrived at the farm.

"Well, now, is it you, Pitou?" cried a broad-shouldered man, standing somewhat proudly by the side of a pond to which he had led his horse to drink.

"Eh! good Lord! Yes, Monsieur Billot, it is myself."

"Another misfortune has befallen this poor Pitou," said the young girl, jumping off her horse, without feeling at all uneasy as to whether her petticoat hitched or not, to show the color of her garters; "his aunt has turned him out of doors."

"And what has he done to the old bigot?" said the farmer.

"It appears that I am not strong enough in Greek."

He was boasting, the puppy. He ought to have said in Latin.

"Not strong enough in Greek!" exclaimed the broad-shouldered man. "And why should you wish to be strong in Greek?"

"To construe Theocritus and read the Iliad."

"And of what use would it be to you to construe Theocritus and read the Iliad?"

"It would be of use in making me an abbé."

"Bah!" ejaculated Monsieur Billot, "and do I know Greek? do I know Latin? do I know even French? do I know how to read? do I know how to write? That does not hinder me from sowing, from reaping, and getting my harvest into the granary."

"Yes, but you, Monsieur Billot, you are not an abbé; you are a cultivator of the earth, *agricola*, as Virgil says. *O fortunatos nimium* —"

"Well, and do you then believe that a cultivator is not equal to a black-cap; say, then, you shabby chorister you, is he not so, particularly when this cultivator has sixty acres of good land in the sunshine, and a thousand louis in the shade?"

"I had been always told that to be an abbé was the best thing in the world. It is true," added Pitou, smiling with his most agreeable smile, "that I did not always listen to what was told me."

"And I give you joy, my boy. You see that I can rhyme like any one else when I set to work. It appears to me that there is stuff in you to make something better than an abbé, and that it is a lucky thing for you not to take to that trade, particularly as times now go. Do you see now, as a farmer I know something of the weather, and the weather just now is bad for abbés."

"Bah!" exclaimed Pitou.

"Yes, we shall have a storm," rejoined the farmer, "and that ere long, believe me. You are honest, you are learned —"

Pitou bowed, much honored at being called learned, for the first time in his life.

"You can therefore gain a livelihood without that."

Mademoiselle Billot, while taking the fowls and pigeons out of the panniers, was listening with much interest to the dialogue between Pitou and her father.

"Gain a livelihood," rejoined Pitou; "that appears a difficult matter to me."

"What can you do?"

"Do! why, I can lay lime-twigs, and set wires for rabbits. I can imitate, and tolerably well, the notes of birds, can I not, Mademoiselle Catherine?"

"Oh, that is true enough!" she replied. "He can whistle like a blackbird."

"Yes, but all this is not a trade, a profession," observed Father Billot.

"And that is what I say, by heaven!"

"You swear, — that is already something."

"How, did I swear?" said Pitou. "I beg your pardon for having done so, Monsieur Billot."

"Oh, there is no occasion, none at all," said the farmer; "it happens also to me sometimes. Eh! thunder of heaven!" cried he, turning to his horse, "will you be quiet, hey? These devils of Perch horses, they must be always neighing and fidgeting about. But now, tell me," said he, again addressing Pitou, "are you lazy?"

"I do not know. I have never done anything but Latin and Greek, and —"

"And what?"

"And I must admit that I did not take to them very readily."

"So much the better," cried Billot; "that proves you are not so stupid as I thought you."

Pitou opened his eyes to an almost terrific width; it was the first time he had ever heard such an order of things advocated, and which was completely subversive of all the theories which up to that time he had been taught.

"I ask you," said Billot, "if you are so lazy as to be afraid of fatigue."

"Oh, with regard to fatigue, that is quite another thing," replied Pitou; "no, no, no; I could go ten leagues without being fatigued."

"Good! that's something, at all events," rejoined Billot; "by getting a few pounds of flesh more off your bones, you could set up for a runner."

"A few pounds more!" cried Pitou, looking at his own lanky form, his long arms and his legs, which had much the appearance of stilts; "it seems to me, Monsieur Billot, that I am thin enough as it is."

"Upon my word, my friend," cried Billot, laughing very heartily, "you are a perfect treasure."

It was also the first time that Pitou had been estimated at so high a price, and therefore was he advancing from surprise to surprise.

"Listen to me," said the farmer; "I ask you whether you are lazy in respect to work?"

"What sort of work?"

"Why, work in general."

"I do not know, not I; for I have never worked."

Catherine also began to laugh, but this time Père Billot took the matter in a serious point of view.

"Those rascally priests!" said he, shaking his clenched fist towards the town; "and this is the way they bring up lads, in idleness and uselessness. In what way, I ask

you, can this great stripling here be of service to his brethren?"

"Ah! not of much use, certainly; that I know full well," replied Pitou; "fortunately I have no brothers."

"By brethren I mean men in general," observed Billot. "Would you, perchance, insist that all men are not brothers?"

"Oh, that I acknowledge; moreover, it is so said in the gospel."

"And equals," continued the farmer.

"Ah! as to that," said Pitou, "that is quite another affair. If I had been the equal of Monsieur Fortier, he would not so often have thrashed me with his cat-o'-nine-tails and his cane; and if I had been the equal of my aunt, she would not have turned me out of doors."

"I tell you that all men are equal," rejoined the farmer, "and we will very soon prove it to the tyrants."

"*Tyrannis*," added Pitou.

"And the proof of this is, that I will take you into my house."

"You will take me into your house, my dear Monsieur Billot?" cried Pitou, amazed. "Is it not to make game of me that you say this?"

"No; come now, tell me, what would you require to live?"

"Zounds! about three pounds of bread daily."

"And with your bread?"

"A little butter or cheese."

"Well, well," said the farmer; "I see it will not be very expensive to keep you in food. My lad, you shall be fed."

"Monsieur Pitou," said Catherine, "had you not some thing to ask my father?"

"Who? I, Mademoiselle! Oh, good Lord, no!"

"And why was it that you came here, then?"

"Because you were coming here."

"Ah!" cried Catherine, "that is really very gallant; but I accept compliments only at their true value. You came, Monsieur Pitou, to ask my father if he had any news of your protector."

"Ah, that is true!" replied Pitou. "Well, now, how very droll! I had forgotten that altogether."

"You are speaking of our worthy Monsieur Gilbert?" said the farmer, in a tone which evinced the very high consideration he felt for his landlord.

"Precisely," said Pitou. "But I have no longer any need of him; and since Monsieur Billot takes me into his house, I can tranquilly wait his return from America."

"In that case, my friend, you will not have to wait long, for he has returned."

"Really!" cried Pitou; "and when did he arrive?"

"I do not know exactly; but what I know is, that he was at Havre a week ago; for I have in my holsters a packet which comes from him, which he sent to me as soon as he arrived, and which was delivered to me this very morning at Villers-Cotterets; and in proof of that, here it is."

"Who was it told you that it was from him, Father?" said Catherine.

"Why, zounds! since there is a letter in the packet —"

"Excuse me, Father," said Catherine, smiling, "but I thought that you could not read. I only say this, Father, because you make a boast of not knowing how to read."

"Yes, I do boast of it. I wish that people should say, 'Father Billot owes nothing to any man, — not even a schoolmaster. Father Billot made his fortune himself.' That is what I wish people to say. It was not, there-

fore, I who read the letter. It was the quartermaster of the gendarmerie, whom I happened to meet."

"And what did this letter tell you, Father? He is always well satisfied with us, is he not?"

"Judge for yourself."

And the farmer drew from his leather wallet a letter, which he handed to his daughter. Catherine read as follows: —

My dear Monsieur Billot, — I have arrived from America, where I found a people richer, greater, and happier than the people of our country. This arises from their being free, which we are not. But we are also advanced toward a new era. Every one should labor to hasten the day when the light shall shine. I know your principles, Monsieur Billot. I know your influence over your brother farmers, and over the whole of that worthy population of workmen and laborers whom you order, not as a king, but as a father. Inculcate in them principles of self-devotedness and fraternity, which I have observed that you possess. Philosophy is universal: all men ought to read their duties by the light of its torch. I send you a small book, in which all these duties and all these rights are set forth. This little book was written by me, although my name does not appear upon the titlepage. Propagate the principles it contains, which are those of universal equality. Let it be read aloud in the long winter evenings. Reading is the pasture of the mind, as bread is the food of the body.

One of these days I shall go to see you, and propose to you a new system of farm-letting, which is much in use in America. It consists in dividing the produce of the land between the farmer and landlord. This appears to me more in conformity with the laws of primitive society, and above all more in accordance with the goodness of God. Health and fraternity.

Honoré Gilbert,
Citizen of Philadelphia.

"Oh! oh!" cried Pitou; "this is a well-written letter."

"Is it not?" said Billot, delighted.

"Yes, my dear father," observed Catherine; "but I doubt whether the quartermaster of the gendarmerie is of your opinion."

"And why do you think so?"

"Because it appears to me that this letter may not only bring the doctor into trouble, but you also, my dear father."

"Pshaw!" said Billot; "you are always afraid. But that matters not. Here is the pamphlet; and here is employment ready found for you, Pitou. In the evenings you shall read it."

"And in the daytime?"

"In the daytime you will take care of the sheep and cows. In the mean time, there is your pamphlet."

And the farmer took from one of his holsters one of those small pamphlets with a red cover of which so great a number were published in those days, either with or without permission of the authorities.

Only, in the latter case, the author ran the risk of being sent to the galleys.

"Read me the title of that book, Pitou, that I may always speak of the title until I shall be able to speak of the work itself. You shall read the remainder to me another time."

Pitou read on the first page these words, which habit has since rendered very vague and very insignificant, but which at that period struck to the very fibres of all hearts:

"*Of the Independence of Man, and the Liberty of Nations.*"

"What do you say to that, Pitou?" inquired the farmer.

"I say that it appears to me, Monsieur Billot, tha'

independence and liberty are the same thing. My protector would be turned out of Monsieur Fortier's class for being guilty of a pleonasm."

"Pleonasm or not," cried the farmer, "that book is the book of a man."

"That matters not, Father," said Catherine, with woman's admirable instinct. "Hide it, I entreat you! It will bring you into trouble. As to myself, I know that I am trembling even at the sight of it."

"And why would you have it injure me, since it has not injured its author?"

"And how can you tell that, Father? It is eight days since that letter was written; and it could not have taken eight days for the parcel to have come from Havre. I also have received a letter this morning."

"And from whom?"

"From Sebastian Gilbert, who has written to make inquiries. He desires me, even, to remember him to his foster-brother, Pitou. I had forgotten to deliver his message."

"Well!"

"Well! he says that for three days he had been expecting his father's arrival in Paris, and that he had not arrived."

"Mademoiselle is right," said Pitou. "It seems to me that this non-arrival is disquieting."

"Hold your tongue, you timid fellow, and read the doctor's treatise," said the farmer; "then you will become not only learned, but a man."

It was thus people spoke in those days; for they were at the preface of that great Grecian and Roman history which the French nation imitated, during ten years, in all its phases, devotedness, proscriptions, victories, and slavery.

Pitou put the book under his arm with so solemn a gesture that he completely gained the farmer's heart.

"And now," said Billot, "have you dined?"

"No, sir," replied Pitou, maintaining the semi-religious, semi-heroic attitude he had assumed since the book had been intrusted to his care.

"He was just going to get his dinner, when he was driven out of doors," said the young girl.

"Well, then," said Billot, "go in and ask my wife for the usual farm fare, and to-morrow you shall enter on your functions."

Pitou, with an eloquent look, thanked Monsieur Billot, and, led by Catherine, entered the kitchen, — a domain placed under the absolute direction of Madame Billot.

CHAPTER VI.

PASTORAL SCENES.

Madame Billot was a stout, buxom mamma, between thirty-five and thirty-six years old, round as a ball, fresh-colored, smooth-skinned, and cordial in her manners. She trotted continually from the fowl-house to the dove-cote, from the sheep-pens to the cow-stable. She inspected the simmering of her soup, the stoves on which her fricassees and ragouts were cooking, and the spit on which the joint was roasting, as does a general when surveying his cantonments, judging by a mere glance whether everything was in its right place, and by their very odor, whether the thyme and laurel-leaves were distributed in due proportions in the stewpans. She scolded from habit, but without the slightest intention that her scolding should be disagreeable; and her husband, whom she honored as she would the greatest potentate of the earth, did not escape. Her daughter also got her share, though she loved her more than Madame de Sevigné loved Madame de Grignan; and neither were her work-people overlooked, though she fed them better than any farmer in a circuit of ten leagues fed his. Therefore was it, that when a vacancy occurred in her household, there was great competition to obtain the place. But, as in heaven, unfortunately there were many applicants and comparatively but few chosen.

We have seen that Pitou, without having been an applicant, had been elected. This was a happiness that he appreciated at its just value, especially when he saw

the well-browned loaf which was placed at his left hand, the pot of cider which was on his right, and the piece of pickled pork on a plate before him. Since the moment that he lost his poor mother, and that was about five years since, Pitou had not, even on great festival days, partaken of such fare.

Therefore Pitou, full of gratitude, felt, as by degrees he bolted the bread which he devoured, and as he washed down the pork with large draughts of the cider, — therefore Pitou felt a vast augmentation of respect for the farmer, of admiration for his wife, and of love for his daughter. There was only one thing which disquieted him, and that was the humiliating function he would have to fulfil, during the day, of herding the sheep and cows, — a function so little in harmony with that which awaited him each evening, and the object of which was to instruct humanity in the most elevated principles of socialism and philosophy.

It was on this subject that Pitou was meditating immediately after his dinner. But even in this reverie the influence of that excellent dinner was sensibly manifested. He began to consider things in a very different point of view from that which he had taken of them when fasting. The functions of a shepherd and a cow-driver, which he considered as so far beneath him, had been fulfilled by gods and demi-gods.

Apollo, in a situation very similar to his own, that is to say, driven from Olympus by Jupiter, as he, Pitou had been driven from Pleux by his aunt, had become a shepherd, and tended the flocks of Admetus. It is true that Admetus was a shepherd-king; but then, Apollo was a god!

Hercules had been a cow-keeper, or something very like it, since — as we are told by mythology — he seized the

cows of Geryon by the tail; for whether a man leads a cow by the tail or by the head depends entirely on the difference of custom of those who take care of them, and that is all; and this would not in any way change the fact itself that he was a cow-leader, that is to say, a cow-keeper.

And moreover, Tityrus, reclining at the foot of a beech-tree, of whom Virgil speaks, and who congratulates himself, in such beautiful verses, on the repose which Augustus has granted to him, — he also was a shepherd. And, finally, Melibæus was a shepherd, who so poetically bewails having left his domestic hearth.

Certainly, all these persons spoke Latin well enough to have been abbés, and yet they preferred seeing their goats browse on the bitter cytisus to saying mass or to chanting vespers. Therefore, taking everything into consideration, the calling of a shepherd had its charms. Moreover, what was to prevent Pitou from restoring to it the poetry and the dignity it had lost? who could prevent Pitou from proposing trials of skill in singing, to the Menalcas and the Palemons of the neighboring villages? No one, undoubtedly. Pitou had more than once sung in the choir; and but for his having once been caught drinking the wine out of the Abbé Fortier's cruet, who, with his usual rigor, had on the instant dismissed the singing boy, this talent might have become transcendent. He could not play upon the pipe, 't is true, but he could imitate the note of every bird, which is very nearly the same thing. He could not make himself a lute with pipes of unequal thickness, as did the lover of Syrinx; but from the linden-tree or the chestnut he could cut whistles whose perfection had more than once aroused the enthusiastic applause of his companions. Pitou therefore could become a shepherd without great derogation

of his dignity. He did not lower himself to this profession, so ill appreciated in modern days; he elevated the profession to his own standard.

Besides which, the sheepfolds were placed under the special direction of Mademoiselle Billot, and receiving orders from her lips was not receiving orders.

But, on her part, Catherine watched over the dignity of Pitou.

In the evening, when the young man approached her, and asked her at what hour he ought to go out to rejoin the shepherds, she said, smiling, —

"You will not go out at all."

"And why so?" said Pitou, with astonishment.

"I have made my father comprehend that the education you have received places you above the functions which he had allotted to you. You will remain at the farm."

"Ah! so much the better," said Pitou. "In this way, I shall not leave you."

The exclamation had escaped the ingenuous Pitou. But he had no sooner uttered it, than he blushed to his very ears; while Catherine, on her part, held down her head and smiled.

"Ah! forgive me, Mademoiselle. It came from my heart in spite of me. You must not be angry with me on that account," said Pitou.

"I am not angry with you, Monsieur Pitou," said Catherine; "and it is no fault of yours if you feel pleasure in remaining with me."

There was a silence of some moments. This was not at all astonishing, the poor children had said so much to each other in so few words.

"But," said Pitou, "I cannot remain at the farm doing nothing. What am I to do at the farm?"

"You will do what I used to do. You will keep the books, the accounts with the work-people, and of our receipts and expenses. You know how to reckon, do you not?"

"I know my four rules," proudly replied Pitou.

"That is one more than ever I knew," said Catherine. "I never was able to get farther than the third. You see, therefore, that my father will be a gainer by having you for his accountant; and as I also shall gain, and you yourself will gain by it, everybody will be a gainer."

"And in what way will you gain by it, Mademoiselle?" inquired Pitou.

"I shall gain time by it, and in that time I will make myself caps, that I may look prettier."

"Ah!" cried Pitou, "I think you quite pretty enough without caps."

"That is possible; but it is only your own individual taste," said the young girl, laughing. "Moreover, I cannot go and dance on a Sunday at Villers-Cotterets, without having some sort of a cap upon my head. That is all very well for your great ladies, who have the right of wearing powder and going bareheaded."

"I think your hair more beautiful as it is, than if it were powdered," said Pitou.

"Come, come, now; I see you are bent on paying me compliments."

"No, Mademoiselle, I do not know how to make them. We did not learn that at the Abbé Fortier's."

"And did you learn to dance there?"

"To dance?" inquired Pitou, greatly astonished.

"Yes — to dance?"

"To dance, and at the Abbé Fortier's? Good Lord, Mademoiselle! — oh! learn to dance, indeed!"

"Then, you do not know how to dance?"

"No," said Pitou.

"Well, then, you shall go with me to the ball on Sunday, and you will look at Monsieur de Charny while he is dancing. He is the best dancer of all the young men in the neighborhood."

"And who is this Monsieur de Charny?" demanded Pitou.

"He is the proprietor of the Château de Boursonne."

"And he will dance on Sunday?"

"Undoubtedly."

"And with whom?"

"With me."

Pitou's heart sank within him, without his being able to ascertain a reason for it.

"Then," said he, "it is in order to dance with him that you wish to dress yourself so finely."

"To dance with him — with others — with everybody."

"Excepting with me."

"And why not with you?"

"Because I do not know how to dance."

"You will learn."

"Ah! if you would but teach me, — you, Mademoiselle Catherine. I should learn much better than by seeing Monsieur de Charny, I can assure you."

"We shall see as to that," said Catherine. "In the mean time, it is bedtime. Good-night, Pitou."

"Good-night, Mademoiselle Catherine."

There was something both agreeable and disagreeable in what Mademoiselle Catherine had said to Pitou. The agreeable was, that he had been promoted from the rank of a cow-keeper and shepherd to that of book-keeper. The disagreeable was, that he did not know how to dance, and that Monsieur de Charny did know. According to

what Catherine had said, he was the best dancer in the whole neighborhood.

Pitou was dreaming all night that he saw Monsieur de Charny dancing, and that he danced very badly.

The next day Pitou entered upon his new office, under the direction of Catherine. Then one thing struck him, and it was that, under some masters, study is altogether delightful. In the space of about two hours he completely understood the duties he had to perform.

"Ah, Mademoiselle!" exclaimed he, "if you had but taught me Latin, instead of that Abbé Fortier, I believe I never should have committed any barbarisms."

"And you would have become an abbé?"

"And I should have been an abbé," replied Pitou.

"So, then, you would have shut yourself up in a seminary, in which no woman would have entered."

"Well, now," cried Pitou, "I really had never thought of that, Mademoiselle Catherine. I would much rather, then, not be an abbé."

The good man Billot returned home at nine o'clock. He had gone out before Pitou was up. Every morning the farmer rose at three o'clock, to see to the sending out of his horses and his wagoners. Then he went over his fields until nine o'clock, to see that every one was at his post, and that all his laborers were doing their duty. At nine o'clock he returned to the house to breakfast, and went out again at ten. One o'clock was the dinner-hour; and the afternoon was, like the morning, spent in looking after the workmen. Thus the affairs of worthy Billot were prospering marvellously. As he had said, he possessed sixty acres in the sunshine, and a thousand louis in the shade; and it was even probable that, had the calculation been correctly made — had Pitou made up the account, and had not been too much agitated by the

presence or remembrance of Mademoiselle Catherine, some few acres of land, and some few hundred louis more, would have been found than the worthy farmer had himself admitted.

At breakfast, Billot informed Pitou that the first reading of Dr. Gilbert's new book was to take place in the barn, two days after, at ten in the morning.

Pitou then timidly observed that ten o'clock was the hour for attending mass. But the farmer said that he had specially selected that hour to try his workmen.

We have already said that Father Billot was a philosopher.

He detested the priests, whom he considered as the apostles of tyranny; and finding an opportunity for raising an altar against an altar, he eagerly took advantage of it.

Madame Billot and Catherine ventured to offer some observations; but the farmer replied that the women might, if they chose, go to mass, seeing that religion had been made expressly for women; but as to the men, they should attend the reading of the doctor's work, or they should leave his service.

Billot, the philosopher, was very despotic in his own house. Catherine alone had the privilege of raising her voice against his decrees. But if these decrees were so tenaciously determined upon that he knitted his brows when replying to her, Catherine became as silent as the rest.

Catherine, however, thought of taking advantage of the circumstance to benefit Pitou. On rising from table she observed to her father that, in order to read all the magnificent phrases he would have to read on the Sunday morning, Pitou was but miserably clad; that he was about to play the part of a master, since he was to in-

struct others; and that the master ought not to be placed in a position to blush in the presence of his disciples.

Billot authorized his daughter to make an arrangement with Monsieur Dulauroy, the tailor at Villers-Cotterets, for a new suit of clothes for Pitou.

Catherine was right; for new garments were not merely a matter of taste with regard to Pitou. The breeches which he wore were the same which Dr. Gilbert had, five years before, ordered for him. At that time they were too long, but since then had become much too short. We are compelled to acknowledge, however, that, through the care of Mademoiselle Angélique, they had been elongated at least two inches every year. As to the coat and waistcoat, they had both disappeared for upwards of two years, and had been replaced by the serge gown in which our hero first presented himself to the observation of our readers.

Pitou had never paid any attention to his toilet. A looking-glass was an unknown piece of furniture in the abode of Mademoiselle Angélique; and not having, like the handsome Narcissus, any violent tendency to fall in love with himself, Pitou had never thought of looking at himself in the transparent rivulets near which he set his bird-snares.

But from the moment that Mademoiselle Catherine had spoken to him of accompanying her to the ball, from the moment the elegant cavalier, Monsieur de Charny's name had been mentioned, since the conversation about caps, on which the young girl calculated to increase her attractions, Pitou had looked at himself in a mirror, and, being rendered melancholy by the very dilapidated condition of his garments, had asked himself in what way he also could make any addition to his natural advantages.

Unfortunately, Pitou was not able to find any solution to this question. The dilapidation of his clothes was positive. Now, in order to have new clothes made, it was necessary to have ready cash; and during the whole course of his existence Pitou had never possessed a single sou.

Pitou had undoubtedly read that, when shepherds were contending for the prize in music or in poetry, they decorated themselves with roses. But he thought, and with great reason, that although such a wreath might well assort with his expressive features, it would only place in stronger relief the miserable state of his habiliments.

Pitou was, therefore, most agreeably surprised when, on the Sunday morning, at eight o'clock, and at the moment he was racking his brains for some means of embellishing his person, Monsieur Dulauroy entered his room and placed upon a chair a coat and breeches of sky-blue cloth, and a large white waistcoat with red stripes.

At the same instant a sempstress came in, and laid upon another chair, opposite to the above-mentioned one, a new shirt and a cravat. If the shirt fitted well, she had orders to complete the half-dozen.

It was a moment teeming with surprise. Behind the sempstress appeared the hat-maker. He had brought with him a small cocked hat of the very latest fashion and of most elegant shape, and which had been fabricated by Monsieur Cornu, the first hat-maker in Villers-Cotterets.

A shoemaker had also been ordered to bring shoes for Pitou; and he had with him a pair with handsome silver buckles made expressly for him.

Pitou could not recover his amazement; he could not in any way comprehend that all these riches were for him.

In his most exaggerated dreams he could not even have dared to wish for so sumptuous a wardrobe. Tears of gratitude gushed from his eyelids, and he could only murmur out these words: —

"Oh! Mademoiselle Catherine! Mademoiselle Catherine! never will I forget what you have done for me."

Everything fitted remarkably well, and as if Pitou had been actually measured for them, with the sole exception of the shoes, which were too small by half. Monsieur Lauderau, the shoemaker, had taken measure by the foot of his son, who was four years Pitou's senior.

This superiority over young Lauderau gave a momentary feeling of pride to our hero; but this feeling of pride was soon checked by the reflection that he would either be obliged to go to the dance in his old shoes, or in no shoes at all, which would not be in accordance with the remainder of his costume. But this uneasiness was not of long duration. A pair of shoes which had been sent home at the same time to Farmer Billot fitted him exactly. It fortunately happened that Billot's feet and Pitou's were of the same dimensions, which was carefully concealed from Billot, for fear that so alarming a fact might annoy him.

While Pitou was busied in arraying himself in these sumptuous habiliments, the hairdresser came in and divided Pitou's hair into three compartments. One, and the most voluminous, was destined to fall over the collar of his coat, in the form of a tail; the two others were destined to ornament the temples, by the strange and unpoetical name of dog's-ears, — ridiculous enough, but that was the name given to them in those days.

And now there is one thing we must acknowledge, — and that is, that when Pitou, thus combed and frizzled,

dressed in his sky-blue coat and breeches, with his rose-striped waistcoat and his frilled shirt, with his tail and his dog's-ear curls, looked at himself in the glass, he found great difficulty in recognizing himself, and twisted himself about to see whether Adonis in person had not redescended on the earth.

He was alone. He smiled graciously at himself; and with head erect, his thumbs thrust into his waistcoat pockets, he said, raising himself upon his toes: —

"We shall see this Monsieur de Charny!"

It is true that Ange Pitou in his new costume resembled, as one pea does another, not one of Virgil's shepherds, but one of those so admirably painted by Watteau.

Consequently, the first step which Pitou made on entering the farm-kitchen was a perfect triumph.

"Oh, mamma, only see," cried Catherine, "how well Pitou looks now!"

"The fact is, that one would hardly know him again," replied Madame Billot.

Unfortunately, after the first general survey which had so much struck the young girl, she entered into a more minute examination of the details, and found Pitou less good-looking in the detailed than in the general view.

"Oh, how singular!" cried Catherine! "what great hands you have!"

"Yes," said Pitou, proudly, "I have famous hands, have I not?"

"And what thick knees!"

"That is a proof that I shall grow taller."

"Why, it appears to me that you are tall enough already, Monsieur Pitou," observed Catherine.

"That does not matter; I shall grow taller still," said Pitou. "I am only seventeen and a half years old."

"And no calves!"

"Ah, yes, that is true, — none at all; but they will grow soon."

"That is to be hoped," said Catherine, "but no matter, you are very well as you are."

Pitou made a bow.

"Oh! oh!" exclaimed Billot, coming in at that moment, and also struck with Pitou's appearance. "How fine you are, my lad! How I wish your Aunt Angélique could see you now."

"And so do I," said Pitou.

"I wonder what she would say?"

"She would not say a word, she would be in a perfect fury."

"But, Father," said Catherine, with a certain degree of uneasiness, "would she not have the right to take him back again?"

"Why, she turned him out of doors."

"And, besides," said Pitou, "the five years have gone by."

"What five years?" inquired Catherine.

"The five years for which Doctor Gilbert left a thousand francs."

"Had he then left a thousand francs with your aunt?"

"Yes, yes, yes: to get me into a good apprenticeship."

"That *is* a man!" exclaimed the farmer. "When one thinks that I hear something of the same kind related of him every day. Therefore — to him," he added, stretching out his hands with a gesture of admiration, "will I be devoted in life and death."

"He wished that I should learn some trade," said Pitou.

"And he was right. And this is the way in which good intentions are thwarted. A man leaves a thousand francs that a child may be taught a trade, and instead of having him taught a trade, he is placed under the tuition of a bigoted priest who destines him for the seminary! And how much did she pay to your Abbé Fortier?"

"Who?"

"Your aunt."

"She never paid him anything."

"What? Did she pocket the two hundred livres a year, which that good Monsieur Gilbert paid!"

"Probably."

"Listen to me, for I have a bit of advice to give you, Pitou; whenever your bigoted old aunt shall walk off, take care to examine minutely every cupboard, every mattress, every pickle-jar —"

"And for what?" asked Pitou.

"Because, do you see, you will find some hidden treasure, some good old louis, in some old stocking-foot. Why, it must undoubtedly be so, for she could never have found a purse large enough to contain all her savings."

"Do you think so?"

"Most assuredly. But we will speak of this at a more proper time and place. To-day we must take a little walk. Have you Doctor Gilbert's book?"

"I have it here, in my pocket."

"Father," said Catherine, "have you well reflected upon this?"

"There is no need for reflection," replied the farmer, "when one is about to do a good thing, my child. The doctor told me to have the book read, and to propagate the principles which it contains; the book shall therefore be read, and the principles shall be propagated."

"And," said Catherine, timidly, "may my mother and I, then, go to attend mass?"

"Go to mass, my child; go with your mother," replied Billot. "You are women; we, who are men, have other things to think of. Come, Pitou, we must be off, for we are waited for."

Pitou bowed majestically to Madame Billot and Mademoiselle Catherine; then with head erect he followed the worthy farmer, proud of having been thus, for the first time, called a man.

CHAPTER VII.

IN WHICH IT IS DEMONSTRATED THAT ALTHOUGH LONG LEGS MAY BE SOMEWHAT UNGRACEFUL IN DANCING, THEY ARE VERY USEFUL IN RUNNING.

THERE was a numerous assemblage in the barn. Billot, as we have said, was much respected by his laborers, inasmuch as, though he scolded them unscrupulously, he fed and paid them well.

Consequently every one of them had hastened eagerly to accept his invitation.

Moreover, at this period the people had been seized with that extraordinary fever which pervades nations when nations are about to set themselves to work to produce some great change. Strange, new words, which until then had scarcely ever been uttered, issued from mouths which had never before pronounced them. They were the words, Liberty, Independence, Emancipation; and, strange to say, it was not only among the people that these words were heard; no, these words had been pronounced in the first place by the nobility, and the voice which responded to them was but an echo.

It was in the west that had first shone forth this light, which was destined to illuminate until it seared. It was in America that arose this sun, which, in accomplishing its course, was to make France one vast conflagration, by the light of which the affrighted nations were to read the word Republic traced in vivid characters of blood.

But notwithstanding this, meetings in which political affairs were discussed were less frequent than one would imagine. Men who had sprung up no one knew from where, apostles of an invisible deity, had traversed town and country, disseminating everywhere words in praise of liberty. The government, blinded heretofore, began at length to open its eyes. Those who were at the head of the immense machine denominated the "state," felt that some of its wheels were paralyzed, without being able to comprehend whence the obstacle proceeded. The opposition existed in all minds, if it had not yet instilled itself into all hands and arms; invisible, though present, though sensible, though threatening, and still more threatening from being like ghosts intangible, and from being divined although it could not be clutched.

Twenty or twenty-five husbandmen, all in the employment of Billot, had assembled in the barn.

Billot entered it, followed by Pitou. All heads were instantly uncovered, and they waved their hats to welcome their loved master. It was plainly visible that all these men were ready to meet death, should he but give the signal.

The farmer explained to the country-people that the pamphlet which Pitou was about to read to them was the work of Doctor Gilbert. The doctor was well known throughout the whole district, in which he was the proprietor of several farms, the one rented by Billot being the most considerable.

A cask had been prepared for the reader. Pitou ascended this extempore forum, and at once began.

It is to be remarked that people of the lower class, and I might almost venture to say, men in general, listen with most attention to that which they understand the least. It was evident that the general sense of the

pamphlet escaped the perceptions of the most enlightened among this rustic auditory, and even of Billot himself. But in the midst of that obscure phraseology from time to time flashed, like lightnings in a dark sky charged with electricity, the luminous words, Independence, Liberty, Equality. Nothing more was necessary; shouts of applause burst forth; cries of "Long live Doctor Gilbert!" resounded on every side. Not more than one third of the pamphlet had been read; it was decided that the remainder should be delivered on the two following Sundays.

The auditors were therefore invited for the next Sunday, and every one of them promised to attend.

Pitou had well performed his part; he had read energetically and well. Nothing succeeds so well as success. The reader had taken his share of the plaudits which had been addressed to the work, and, submitting to the influence of this relative science, Billot himself felt growing within him a certain degree of consideration for the pupil of the Abbé Fortier. Pitou, already a giant in his physical proportions, had morally grown ten inches in the opinion of Billot.

But there was one thing wanting to Pitou's happiness; Mademoiselle Catherine had not been present at his triumph.

But Father Billot, enchanted with the effect produced by the doctor's pamphlet, hastened to communicate its success to his wife and daughter. Madame Billot made no reply; she was a short-sighted woman.

Mademoiselle Catherine smiled sorrowfully.

"Well, what is the matter with you now?" said the farmer.

"Father! my dear father!" cried Catherine, "I fear that you are running into danger."

"There, now; are you going to play the bird of ill omen? You are well aware that I like the lark better than the owl."

"Father, I have already been told to warn you that eyes are watching you."

"And who was it that told you this, if you please?"

"A friend."

"A friend? All advice is deserving of thanks. You must tell me the name of this friend. Who is he? Come, now, let us hear."

"A man who ought to be well informed upon such matters."

"But who is it?"

"Monsieur Isidore de Charny."

"What business has that fop to meddle in such matters? Does he pretend to give me advice upon my way of thinking? Do I give him advice upon his mode of dressing? It appears to me that as much might be said on one subject as the other."

"My dear father, I do not tell you this to vex you. The advice he gave me was well intended."

"Well, then, in return, I will give him my counsel, which you can on my behalf transmit to him."

"And what is that?"

"It is that he and his fellows take good care what they are about. They shake these noble gentlemen about very nicely in the National Assembly, and more than once a great deal has been said of court favorites, male and female. Let him forewarn his brother, Monsieur Oliver de Charny, who is out yonder, to look to himself, for it is said he is not on bad terms with the Austrian woman."

"Father," said Catherine, "you have more experience than we have; act according to your pleasure."

"Yes, indeed," murmured Pitou, whose success had given him great confidence, "what business has your Monsieur Isidore to make and meddle?"

Catherine either did not hear him, or pretended not to hear him, and the conversation dropped.

The dinner was got through as usual. Never did dinner appear so long to Pitou. He was feverishly impatient to show himself abroad with Mademoiselle Catherine leaning on his arm. This Sunday was a momentous day to him, and he resolved that the date, the 12th of July, should ever remain engraved upon his memory.

They left the farm at last at about three o'clock. Catherine was positively charming. She was a pretty, fair-haired girl, with black eyes, slight and flexible as the willows that shaded the small spring from which the farm was supplied with water. She was, moreover, dressed with that natural coquetry which enhances the attractions of every woman, and her pretty little fantastic cap, made with her own hands, as she had told Pitou, became her admirably.

The ball did not in general commence till six o'clock. Four village minstrels, mounted upon a small stage formed of planks, did the honors of this ball-room in the open air, on receiving a contribution of six shillings for every country dance.

While waiting for the opening of the dance, the company walked in the celebrated Lane of Sighs, of which Aunt Angélique had spoken, to see the young gentlemen of the town and the neighborhood play at tennis, under the direction of Master Farollet, tennis-master-in-chief to his Highness the Duke of Orleans. Master Farollet was considered a perfect oracle, and his decision in matters of *chasse* and *passe*, and service, was as irrevocable as were the laws of the Medes and Persians.

Pitou, without knowing why, would have very much desired to remain in the Lane of Sighs; but it was not for the purpose of remaining concealed beneath the shade of this double row of beech-trees that Catherine had attired herself in the becoming dress which had so much astonished Pitou.

Women are like the flowers which chance has brought forth in the shade: their tendency is always towards the light; and one way or the other they must expand their fresh and perfumed petals in the sunshine, though it withers and destroys them.

The violet alone, as is asserted by the poets, has the modesty to remain concealed; but then she is arrayed in mourning, as if deploring her useless, because unnoticed, charms.

Catherine, therefore, dragged away at Pitou's arm, and so successfully, that they took the path to the tennis-court. We must, however, hasten to acknowledge that Pitou did not go very unwillingly. He also was as anxious to display his sky-blue suit and his cocked hat, as Catherine was to show her Galatea cap and her shining short silk bodice.

One thing above all flattered our hero, and gave him a momentary advantage over Catherine. As no one recognized him, Pitou never having been seen in such sumptuous habiliments, they took him for some young stranger arrived in the town, some nephew or cousin of the Billot family; some even asserted that he was Catherine's intended. But Pitou felt too great an interest in proving his own identity, to allow the error to be of long continuance.

He gave so many nods to his friends, he so frequently took off his hat to his acquaintance, that at last the unworthy pupil of the Abbé Fortier was recognized in the spruce young countryman.

A sort of buzzing murmur quickly ran through the throng, and many of his former companions exclaimed, "Why, really, it is Pitou!" "Only look at Pitou!" "Did you see Ange Pitou?"

This clamor at length reached the ears of Mademoiselle Angélique; but as this clamor informed her that the good-looking youth pointed out by it was her nephew, walking with his toes turned out and his elbows gracefully curved, the old maid, who had always seen Pitou walk with his toes turned in and his elbows stuck to his ribs, shook her head incredulously, and merely said, —

"You are mistaken; that is not my pitiful nephew."

The two young people reached the tennis-court. On that day there happened to be a match between the players of Soissons and those of Villers-Cotterets, so that the game was very animated. Catherine and Pitou placed themselves close to the rope stretched to prevent the crowd from interfering with the players; it was Catherine who had selected this place as being the best.

In about a minute the voice of Master Farollet was heard, calling out, —

"Two in — go over."

The players effectually changed places; that is to say, they each went to defend their quarters and attack those of their adversaries. One of the players, on passing by, bowed to Catherine with a smile; Catherine replied by a courtesy, and blushed. At the same moment Pitou felt a nervous trembling shoot through Catherine's arm, which was leaning on his.

An unknown anguish shot through Pitou's heart.

"That is Monsieur de Charny," said he, looking at his companion.

"Yes," replied Catherine. "Ah! you know him, then?"

"I do not know him," replied Pitou, "but I guessed that it was he."

And, in fact, Pitou had readily conceived this young man to be Monsieur de Charny, from what Catherine had said to him the previous evening.

The person who had bowed to the young girl was an elegant gentleman, who might be twenty-three or twenty-four years of age; he was handsome, of good stature, well formed, and graceful in his movements, as are all those who have had an aristocratic education from their very cradle. All those manly exercises in which perfection can only be attained on the condition of their being studied from childhood, Monsieur Isidore de Charny executed with remarkable perfection; besides, he was one of those whose costume always harmonizes with the pursuit in which they are engaged. His hunting-dresses were quoted for their perfect taste; his attire in the fencing-room might have served as a pattern to Saint-Georges himself; and his riding-coats were — or rather appeared to be, thanks to his manner of wearing them — of a particularly elegant shape.

On the present occasion Monsieur de Charny, a younger brother of our old acquaintance the Count de Charny, was attired in tight-fitting pantaloons of a light color, which set off to great advantage the shape of his finely formed and muscular limbs; his hair was negligently dressed, as for the morning; elegant tennis sandals for the moment were substituted for the red-heeled shoe or the top-boots; his waistcoat was of white marsella, fitting as closely to his waist as if he had worn stays; and to sum up all, his servant was waiting upon the slope with a green coat embroidered with gold lace, for his master to put on when the match was ended.

The animation of the game communicated to his fea-

ture» all the charm and freshness of youth, notwithstanding his twenty-three years, the nightly excesses he had committed, and the gambling parties he had attended, which frequently the rising sun had illumined with its rays; all this had made sad havoc with his constitution.

None of these personal advantages, which doubtless the young girl had remarked, had escaped the jealous eyes of Pitou. On observing the small hands and feet of Monsieur de Charny, he began to feel less proud of that prodigality of nature which had given him the victory over the shoemaker's son, and he reflected that nature might have distributed in a more skilful manner over every part of his frame the elements of which it was composed.

In fact, with what there was too much in the hands, the feet, and the knees of Pitou, nature might have furnished him with a handsome, well-formed leg. Only, things were not in their right place: where a certain delicacy of proportion was required, there was an unnatural thickness; where a certain sleekness and rotundity would have been advantageous, there was an utter void.

Pitou looked at his legs with the same expression as the stag did of whom we have read in the fable.

"What is the matter with you, Monsieur Pitou?" said Catherine, who had observed his discontented looks.

Pitou did not reply: he could not explain his feelings; he therefore only sighed.

The game had terminated. The Viscount de Charny took advantage of the interval between the game just finished and the one about to commence, to come over to speak to Catherine. As he approached them, Pitou observed the color heightening in the young girl's cheeks, and felt her arm become more and more trembling.

The Viscount gave a nod to Pitou, and then, with that familiar politeness which the nobility of that period knew

how to adopt with the citizens' daughters and grisettes, he inquired of Catherine as to the state of her health, and asked her to be his partner in the first dance. Catherine accepted. A smile conveyed the thanks of the young nobleman. The game was about to begin, and he was called for. He bowed to Catherine, and then left her with the same elegant ease with which he had approached her.

Pitou felt all the superiority which the man possessed over him, who could speak, smile, approach, and take leave in such a manner.

A month's study, employed in endeavoring to imitate the simple though elegant movements of Monsieur de Charny, would only have produced a ridiculous parody, and this Pitou himself acknowledged.

If Pitou had been capable of entertaining a feeling of hatred, he would from that moment have detested the Viscount de Charny.

Catherine remained looking at the tennis-players until the moment when they called their servants to bring their coats to them. She then directed her steps towards the place set apart for dancing, to Pitou's great despair, who on that day appeared to be destined to go everywhere but where he wished.

Monsieur de Charny did not allow Catherine to wait long for him. A slight change in his dress had converted him from a tennis-player into an elegant dancer.

The violins gave the signal, and he at once presented his hand to Catherine, reminding her of the promise she had made to dance with him.

That which Pitou experienced when he felt Catherine withdrawing her arm from within his, and saw the young girl blushing deeply as she advanced with her cavalier into the circle, was one of the most disagreeable sensa-

tions of his whole life. A cold perspiration stood upon his brow; a cloud passed over his eyes; he stretched out his hand and caught hold of the balustrade for support, for he felt that his knees, strongly constituted as they were, were giving way.

As to Catherine, she did not appear to have, and very probably even had not, any idea of what was passing in poor Pitou's heart. She was at once happy and proud, — happy at being about to dance, and proud of dancing with the handsomest cavalier of the whole neighborhood.

If Pitou had been constrained to admire Monsieur de Charny as a tennis-player, he was no less compelled to do him justice as a dancer. In those days the fashion had not yet sprung up of walking instead of dancing. Dancing was an art which formed a necessary part of the education of every one. Without citing the case of Monsieur de Lauzun, who had owed his fortune to the manner in which he had danced his first steps in the king's quadrille, more than one nobleman owed the favor he had enjoyed at court to the manner in which he had extended his legs or pointed the extremity of his toe. In this respect the Viscount was a model of grace and perfection, and he might, like Louis XIV., have danced in a theatre with the chance of being applauded, although he was neither a king nor an actor.

For the second time Pitou looked at his own legs, and was obliged to acknowledge that unless some great metamorphosis should take place in that portion of his individuality, he must altogether renounce any attempt to succeed in vying with Monsieur de Charny in the particular art which he was displaying at that moment.

The country dance having ended, — for Catherine it had scarcely lasted a few seconds, but to Pitou it had appeared a century, — she returned to resume the arm

of her cavalier, and could not avoid observing the change which had taken place in his countenance. He was pale; the perspiration stood in beads upon his forehead, and a tear, half dried up by jealousy, shone in his humid eye.

"Ah! good heaven!" she exclaimed, "what is the matter with you, Pitou?"

"The matter is," replied the poor youth, "that I shall never dare to dance with you, after having seen you dance with Monsieur de Charny."

"Pshaw!" said Catherine, "you must not allow yourself to be cast down in this way; you will dance as well as you are able, and I shall not feel the less pleasure in dancing with you."

"Ah!" cried Pitou, "you say that, Mademoiselle, to console me; but I know myself, and I feel assured that you will always feel more pleasure in dancing with this young nobleman than with me."

Catherine made no reply, for she would not utter a falsehood, only, as she was an excellent creature, and had begun to perceive that something extraordinary was passing in the heart of the poor youth, she treated him very kindly; but this kindness could not restore to him his lost joy and peace of mind. Father Billot had spoken truly: Pitou was beginning to be a man, — he was suffering.

Catherine danced five or six country dances after this, one of which was with Monsieur de Charny. This time, without suffering less in reality than before, Pitou was, in appearance, much more calm. He followed with eager eyes each movement of Catherine and her cavalier. He endeavored from the motion of their lips to divine what they were saying to each other, and when, during the figures of the dance, their hands were joined, he tried to

discern whether their hands merely touched or pressed each other when thus they came in contact.

Doubtless it was the second dance with De Charny that Catherine had been awaiting, for it was scarcely ended when the young girl proposed to Pitou to return to the farm. Never was proposal acceded to with more alacrity; but the blow was struck, and Pitou, while taking long strides which Catherine from time to time was obliged to restrain, remained perfectly silent.

"What is the matter with you?" at length said Catherine to him, "and why is it that you do not speak to me?"

"I do not speak to you, Mademoiselle," said Pitou, "because I do not know how to speak as Monsieur de Charny does. What would you have me say to you, after all the fine things which he whispered to you while dancing with you?"

"Only see how unjust you are, Monsieur Ange; why, we were speaking of you."

"Of me, Mademoiselle, and how so?"

"Why, Monsieur Pitou, if your protector should not return, you must have another found to supply his place."

"I am then no longer capable of keeping the farm accounts?" inquired Pitou, with a sigh.

"On the contrary, Monsieur Ange, it is the farm accounts which are no longer worthy of being kept by you. With the education that you have received, you can find some more fitting occupation."

"I do not know what I may be fit for, but this I know, that I will not accept anything better if I am to obtain it through the Viscount de Charny."

"And why should you refuse his protection? His brother, the Count de Charny, is, it would appear, in high favor at court, and has married an intimate friend

of the Queen. He told me that if it would be agreeable to me he could obtain for you a place in the custom-house."

"Much obliged, Mademoiselle; but I have already told you that I am well satisfied to remain as I am, and unless, indeed, your father wishes to send me away, I will remain at the farm."

"And why in the Devil's name should I send you away?" cried a gruff voice, which Catherine tremblingly recognized to be that of her father.

"My dear Pitou," said Catherine in a whisper, "do not say a word of Monsieur Isidore, I beg of you."

"Well! why don't you answer?"

"Why, really, I don't know," said Pitou, much confused; "perhaps you do not think me sufficiently well informed to be useful to you?"

"Not sufficiently well informed, when you calculate as well as Barême, and when you read well enough to teach our schoolmaster, who notwithstanding thinks himself a great scholar? No, Pitou, it is God who brings to my house the people who enter it, and when once they are in it they shall remain there as long as God pleases."

Pitou returned to the farm on this assurance; but although this was something, it was not enough. A great change had taken place in his mind between the time of his going out and returning: he had lost a thing which, once lost, is never recovered; this was confidence in himself, and therefore Pitou, contrary to his usual custom, slept very badly. In his waking moments he recalled to mind Doctor Gilbert's book; this book was written principally against the nobility, against the abuses committed by the privileged classes, against the cowardice of those who submitted to them; it appeared to Pitou that he only then began to comprehend all the fine ideas which

he had read that morning, and he promised himself, as soon as it should be daylight, to read again for his own satisfaction, and to himself, the masterpiece which he had read aloud and to everybody.

But as Pitou had slept badly he awoke late. He did not, however, the less determine on carrying into effect his project of reading the book. It was seven o'clock; the farmer would not return until nine; besides, were he to return earlier, he could not but approve an occupation which he had himself recommended.

He descended by a small staircase, and seated himself on a low bench which happened to be under Catherine's window. Was it accident that had led Pitou to seat himself precisely in that spot, or did he know the relative positions of that window and that bench?

Be that as it may, Pitou was attired in his old every-day clothes, which there had not yet been time to get replaced, and which were composed of his black breeches, his green cassock, and his rusty-looking shoes. He drew the pamphlet from his pocket and began to read.

We would not venture to say that on beginning to read, the eyes of Pitou were not, from time to time, turned from his book to the window; but as the window did not exhibit the fair face of the young girl in its framework of nasturtiums and convolvuli, Pitou's eyes at length fixed themselves intently on his book.

It is true that as his hand neglected to turn over the leaves, and that the more fixed his attention appeared to be, the less did his hand move, it might be believed that his mind was fixed upon some other object, and that he was meditating instead of reading.

Suddenly it apppeared to Pitou that a shade was thrown over the pages of the pamphlet, until then illuminated by the morning sun. This shadow, too dense

to be that of a cloud, could therefore only be produced by some opaque body. Now, there are opaque bodies which are so delightful to look upon, that Pitou quickly turned round to ascertain what it was that thus intercepted his sunshine.

Pitou's hopes were, however, delusive. There was in fact an opaque body which robbed him of the daylight and heat which Diogenes desired Alexander not to deprive him of. But this opaque body, instead of being delightful, presented to his view a sufficiently disagreeable appearance.

It was that of a man about forty-five years old, who was taller and thinner than Pitou himself, dressed in a coat almost as threadbare as his own, and who was leaning his head over his shoulder, and appeared to be reading the pamphlet with a curiosity equal to Pitou's absence of mind.

Pitou was very much astonished; a gracious smile was playing round the lips of the dark-looking gentleman, exhibiting a mouth which had only retained four teeth, two in the upper and two in the lower jaw, crossing and sharpening themselves against each other, like the tusks of the wild boar.

"An American edition," said the man, with a strong nasal twang; "an octavo: 'On the Liberty of Man and the Independence of Nations, Boston, 1788.'"

While the black man was talking, Pitou opened his eyes with progressively increasing astonishment, so that when the man ceased speaking, Pitou's eyes had attained the greatest possible development of which they were capable.

"Boston, 1788. That is right, sir," replied Pitou.

"It is the treatise of Doctor Gilbert," said the gentleman in black.

"Yes, sir," politely replied Pitou, rising from his seat, for he had been told that it was uncivil to remain sitting when speaking to a superior; and in the still ingenuous mind of Pitou this man had the right to claim superiority over him.

But on getting up, Pitou observed something of a rosy color moving towards the window, and which gave him a significant glance. This rosy something was Mademoiselle Catherine. The young girl looked at him with an extraordinary expression, and made strange signs to him.

"Sir, if it is not being indiscreet," said the gentleman in black, who, having his back turned towards the window, was altogether ignorant of what was passing, "may I ask to whom this book belongs?"

And he pointed with his finger to the pamphlet which Pitou held in his hand.

Pitou was about to say that the book belonged to Monsieur Billot, when he heard the following words uttered in an almost supplicating tone:—

"Say that it is your own."

The gentleman in black, who was at that moment all eyes, did not hear these words.

"Sir," replied Pitou majestically, "this book belongs to me."

The gentleman in black raised his head, for he began to remark that the amazed looks of Pitou were from time to time diverted from him, to fix themselves on one particular spot. He saw the window, but Catherine had divined the movement of the gentleman in black, and, rapid as a bird, she had disappeared.

"What are you looking at, up yonder?" inquired the gentleman in black.

"Well, now," replied Pitou, smiling, "permit me to

observe to you that you are very inquisitive, — *curiosus*, or rather *avidus cognoscendi*, as the Abbé Fortier, my preceptor, used to say."

"You say, then," rejoined the interrogator, without appearing in the slightest degree intimidated by the proof of learning which Pitou had just given, with the intention of affording the gentleman in black a higher idea of his acquirements than he had before entertained, — "you say, then, that this book is yours?"

Pitou gave his eyes a furtive glance, so that the window came within the scope of his visual organs. Catherine's head again appeared at it, and made him an affirmative sign.

"Yes, sir," replied Pitou. "You are, perhaps, anxious to read it, — *Avidus legendi libri*, or *legendæ historiæ*."

"Sir," said the gentleman in black, "you appear to be much above the position which your attire would indicate. *Non dives vestitu sed ingenio.* Consequently, I arrest you."

"How! you arrest me?" cried Pitou, completely astounded.

"Yes, sir; follow me, I beg of you."

Pitou no longer looked up in the air, but around him, and perceived two police sergeants who were awaiting the orders of the gentleman in black. The two sergeants seemed to him to have sprung up from beneath the ground.

"Let us draw up our report, gentlemen," said the gentleman in black.

The sergeants tied Pitou's hands together with a rope, while they took care to secure Doctor Gilbert's book.

Then they fastened Pitou himself to a ring which was in the wall under the window.

Pitou was about to exclaim against this treatment, but he heard the low voice which had so much influence over him, saying, "Let them do what they please."

Pitou therefore allowed them to do as they pleased, with a docility which perfectly enchanted the sergeants, and above all the gentleman in black; so that without the slightest mistrust they entered the farm-house, the two sergeants to fetch a table, the gentleman in black to — but this we shall learn by-and-by.

The sergeants and the gentleman in black had scarcely entered the house when the soft voice was again heard.

"Hold up your hands," said the voice.

Pitou not only held up his hands but his head, and he perceived the pale and terrified face of Catherine; she had a knife in her hand.

"Higher! higher!" said she.

Pitou raised himself on tiptoe.

Catherine leaned out of the window, the knife touched the rope, and Pitou recovered the liberty of his hands.

"Take the knife," said Catherine, "and in your turn cut the rope which fastens you to the ring."

It was not necessary to repeat this to Pitou. He cut the cord, and was then completely free.

"And now," said Catherine, "here is a double louis. You have good legs; make your escape. Go to Paris and acquaint the doctor —"

She could not complete the sentence. The two sergeants reappeared, and the double louis fell at Pitou's feet.

Pitou quickly snatched it up. The sergeants were on the threshold of the door, where they remained for a moment or two, astonished at seeing the man at liberty, whom so short a time before they had so securely tied

up. On seeing them, Pitou's hair stood on end, and he confusedly remembered the *in crinibus angues* of the Eumenides.

The two sergeants and Pitou remained for a short time in the position of two pointer dogs and a hare, — motionless, and looking at each other. But as at the slightest movement of the dogs the hare springs off, at the first movement of the sergeants Pitou gave a prodigious bound, and leaped over a high hedge.

The sergeants uttered a cry which made the exempt rush out of the house, carrying a small casket under his arm. The exempt did not lose any time in parleying, but instantly ran after Pitou ; the two sergeants imitated his example ; but they were not active enough to jump, as he had done, over a hedge three feet and a half in height. They were therefore compelled to go round to a gate.

But when they reached the corner of the hedge, they perceived Pitou five hundred yards off in the plain, and hastening towards the forest, from which he was distant scarcely a quarter of a league, and which he would doubtless reach in some six or seven minutes.

At that moment Pitou turned round and on perceiving the sergeants, who were pursuing him rather from a desire to perform their duty than with the hope of catching him, he redoubled his speed, and soon disappeared in the skirts of the wood.

Pitou ran on at this rate for another quarter of an hour. He could have run two hours had it been necessary, for he had the wind of a stag, as well as its velocity.

But at the end of a quarter of an hour he felt instinctively that he must be out of danger. He stopped, drew breath, and listened ; and having assured himself that

he had completely distanced his pursuers, he said to himself, —

"It is incredible that so many events can have been crowded into three days;" and he looked alternately at his double louis and his knife.

"Oh," said he, "I wish I had only time to change my double louis, and give two sous to Mademoiselle Catherine, for I am much afraid that this knife will cut our friendship. No matter," added he, "since she has desired me to go to Paris, let us go there."

And Pitou, having looked about him to ascertain what part of the country he had reached, and finding that he was between Bouronne and Yvors, took a narrow path which would lead him straight to Gondreville Heaths, which path was crossed by the road which led direct to Paris.

CHAPTER VIII.

SHOWING WHY THE GENTLEMAN IN BLACK HAD GONE INTO THE FARM AT THE SAME TIME WITH THE TWO SERGEANTS.

But now let us return to the farm, and relate the catastrophe of which Pitou's episode was the winding up.

At about six o'clock in the morning an agent of the Paris police, accompanied by two sergeants, arrived at Villers-Cotterets, had presented themselves to the Commissary of Police, and had requested that the residence of Farmer Billot might be pointed out to them.

When they came within about five hundred yards of the farm, the exempt perceived a laborer working in a field. He went to him and asked him whether he should find Monsieur Billot at home. The laborer replied that Monsieur Billot never returned home till nine o'clock, — that is to say, before the breakfast hour. But at that very moment, as chance would have it, the laborer raised his eyes, and pointed to a man on horseback, who was talking with a shepherd at the distance of a quarter of a league from the farm.

"And yonder," said he, "is the person you are inquiring for."

"Monsieur Billot?"

"Yes."

"That horseman?"

"Yes; that is Monsieur Billot."

"Well, then, my friend," rejoined the exempt, "do you wish to afford great pleasure to your master?"

"I should like it vastly."

"Go and tell him that a gentleman from Paris is waiting for him at the farm."

"Oh," cried the laborer, "can it be Doctor Gilbert?"

"Tell him what I say; that is all."

The countryman did not wait to have the order repeated, but ran as hard as he could across the fields, while the police-officer and the two sergeants went and concealed themselves behind a half-ruined wall which stood facing the gate of the farm-yard.

In a very few minutes the galloping of a horse was heard. It was Billot, who had hastened back.

He went into the farm-yard, jumped from his horse, threw the bridle to one of the stable-boys, and rushed into the kitchen, being convinced that the first person he should see there would be Dr. Gilbert, standing beneath the immense mantel-piece; but he only saw Madame Billot seated in the middle of the room, plucking the feathers from a duck with all the minute care which this difficult operation demands.

Catherine was in her own room, employed in making a cap for the following Sunday. As it appears, Catherine was determined to be prepared in good time; but if the women have one pleasure almost equal to that of being well-dressed, it is that of preparing the articles with which they are to adorn themselves.

Billot paused on the threshold of the kitchen, and looked around inquiringly.

"Who, then, was it sent for me?" said he.

"It was I," replied a flute-like voice behind him.

Billot turned round, and perceived the gentleman in black and the two sergeants.

"Hey-day!" cried he, retreating three paces from them; "and what do you want with me?"

"Oh, good heavens! almost nothing, my dear Monsieur Billot," said the man with the flute-like voice; "only to make a perquisition in your farm, that is all."

"A perquisition?" exclaimed the astonished Billot.

"A perquisition," repeated the exempt.

Billot cast a glance at his fowling-piece, which was hanging over the chimney.

"Since we have a National Assembly," said he, "I thought that citizens were no longer exposed to such vexations, which belong to another age, and which appertain to a bygone state of things. What do you want with me? I am a peaceable and loyal man."

The agents of every police in the world have one habit which is common to them all, — that of never replying to the questions of their victims; but while they are searching their pockets, while they are arresting them, or tying their hands behind, some appear to be moved by pity. These tender-hearted ones are the most dangerous, inasmuch as they appear to be the most kind-hearted.

The one who was exercising his functions in the house of Farmer Billot was of the true Tapin and Desgrés school, made up of sweets, having always a tear for those whom they are persecuting, but who nevertheless do not use their hands to wipe their eyes.

The one in question, although heaving a deep sigh, made a sign with his hand to the two sergeants, who approached Billot. The worthy farmer sprang backward, and stretched out his hand to seize his gun; but it was diverted from the weapon, — a doubly-dangerous act at such a moment, as it might not only have killed the person about to use it, but the one against whom it was to be pointed. His hand was seized and imprisoned between two little hands, rendered strong by terror and powerful by supplication.

It was Catherine, who had run downstairs on hearing the noise, and had arrived in time to save her father from committing the crime of rebelling against the constituted authorities.

The first moment of anger having passed by, Billot no longer offered any resistance. The exempt ordered that he should be confined in a room on the ground floor, and Catherine in a room on the first story. As to Madame Billot, she was considered so inoffensive that no attention was paid to her, and she was allowed to remain in the kitchen. After this, finding himself master of the place, the exempt began to search the secretaries, wardrobes, and chests-of-drawers.

Billot, on finding himself alone, wished to make his escape. But, like most of the rooms on the ground floor of the farm-house, the windows of the one in which he was imprisoned were secured by iron bars. The gentleman in black had at a glance observed these bars, while Billot, who had had them placed there, had forgotten them.

Then, peeping through the key-hole, he perceived the exempt and his two acolytes, who were ransacking everything throughout the house.

"Hilloa!" cried he; "what is the meaning of all this? What are you doing there?"

"You can very plainly see that, my dear Monsieur Billot," said the exempt. "We are seeking for something which we have not yet found."

"But perhaps you are banditti, villains, regular thieves. Who knows?"

"Oh, sir!" replied the exempt, through the door, "you do us wrong. We are honest people, as you are; only that we are in the pay of his Majesty, and consequently compelled to obey his orders."

"His Majesty's orders!" exclaimed Billot. "The king, Louis XVI., has ordered you to search my secretary, to turn everything topsy-turvy in my closets and my wardrobes?"

"Yes."

"His Majesty," rejoined Billot, "who last year, when there was such a frightful famine that we were thinking of eating our horses, — his Majesty, who two years ago, when the hail-storm of the 13th of July destroyed our whole harvest, did not then deign to feel any anxiety about us, — what has he now to do with my farm, which he never saw, or with me, whom he does not know?"

"You will pardon me, sir," said the exempt, opening the door a little, but with great precaution, and exhibiting his order, signed by the lieutenant of police, which, according to the usual form, was headed with these words, "In the king's name," — "his Majesty has heard you spoken of, although he may not be personally acquainted with you; therefore, do not refuse the honor which he does you, and receive in a fitting manner those who present themselves to you in his name."

And the exempt, with a polite bow, and a friendly wink of the eye, closed the door again; after which the search was resumed.

Billot said not a word more, but crossed his arms and paced up and down the room, like a lion in a cage. He felt that he was caught, and in the power of these men.

The investigation was silently continued. These men appeared to have dropped from the clouds. No one had seen them, but the laborer who had been sent to fetch Billot. Even the dogs in the yards had not barked on their approach. Assuredly the chief of this expedition must have been considered a skilful man, even by his

own fraternity. It was evidently not his first enterprise of this nature.

Billot heard the moanings of his daughter, shut up in the room above his own, and he remembered her prophetic words; for there could not be a doubt that the persecution to which the farmer had been subjected had for its cause the doctor's book.

At length the clock struck nine, and Billot through his grated window could count his laborers as they returned to the farm-house to get their breakfast. On seeing this, he reflected that, in case of any conflict, might, if not right, was not on his side. This conviction made the blood boil in his veins. He had no longer the fortitude to restrain his feelings; and seizing the door with both hands, he shook it so violently, that with two or three efforts of the same nature he would have burst the lock.

The police-agents immediately opened the door, and they saw the farmer standing close by it, with threatening looks. All was confusion in the house.

"But finally," cried Billot, "what is it you are seeking for in my house? Tell me, or, zounds! I will make you tell me."

The successive return of the laborers had not escaped the experienced eye of such a man as the exempt. He had counted the farm-servants, and had admitted to himself that in case of any combat he would not be able to retain possession of the field of battle. He therefore approached Billot with a demeanor more honeyed even than before, and bowing almost to the ground, said: —

"I will tell you what it is, dear Monsieur Billot, although it is against our custom. What we are seeking for in your house is a subversive book, an incendiary pamphlet, placed under ban by our royal censors."

"A book! — and in the house of a farmer who cannot read?"

"What is there astonishing in that, if you are a friend of the author, and he has sent it to you?"

"I am not the friend of Doctor Gilbert; I am merely his humble servant. The friend of the doctor, indeed! — that would be too great an honor for a poor farmer like me."

This inconsiderate outbreak, in which Billot betrayed himself by acknowledging that he not only knew the author, which was natural enough, he being his landlord, but that he knew the book, insured the agent's victory. The latter drew himself up, assumed his most amiable air, and touching Billot's arm, said, with a smile which appeared to extend transversely over his face: —

"'T is thou hast named him.' Do you know that verse, my dear Monsieur Billot?"

"I know no verses."

"It is by Racine, a very great poet."

"Well, what is the meaning of that line?" cried Billot.

"It means that you have betrayed yourself."

"Who — I?"

"Yourself."

"And how so?"

"By being the first to mention Monsieur Gilbert, whom we had the discretion not to name."

"That is true," said Billot.

"You acknowledge it, then?"

"I will do more than that."

"My dear Monsieur Billot, you overwhelm us with kindness: what is it you will do?"

"If it is that book you are hunting after, and I tell you where that book is," rejoined the farmer, with an uneasiness which he could not altogether control, "you will

leave off turning everything topsy-turvy here, will you not?"

The exempt made a sign to his two assistants.

"Most assuredly," replied the exempt, "since it is that book which is the object of our perquisition. Only," continued he, with his smiling grimace, "you may perhaps acknowledge one copy of it when you may have ten in your possession."

"I have only one, and that I swear to you."

"But it is this we are obliged to ascertain by a most careful search, dear Monsieur Billot," rejoined the exempt. "Have patience, therefore; in five minutes it will be concluded. We are only poor sergeants obeying the orders of the authorities, and you would not surely prevent men of honor, — there are men of honor in every station of life, dear Monsieur Billot, — you would not throw any impediment in the way of men of honor when they are doing their duty."

The gentleman in black had adopted the right mode: this was the proper course for persuading Billot.

"Well, do it then," replied the farmer, "but do it quickly."

And he turned his back upon them.

The exempt then very gently closed the door, and more gently still turned the key in the lock, at which Billot shrugged his shoulders in disdain, being certain of pulling open the door whenever he might please.

On his side the gentleman in black made a sign to the sergeants, who resumed their investigation, and they set to work much more actively than before. Books, papers, linen, were all opened, examined, unfolded.

Suddenly, at the bottom of a wardrobe which had been completely emptied, they perceived a small oaken casket bound with iron. The exempt darted upon it as a vul-

ture on his prey. At the mere sight, the scent, the handling of this object, he undoubtedly at once recognized that which he was in search of, for he quickly concealed the casket beneath his threadbare coat, and made a sign to the two sergeants that his mission was effected.

Billot was again becoming impatient; he stopped before the locked door.

"Why, I tell you again that you will not find it unless I tell you where it is," he cried; "it is not worth the while to tumble and destroy all my things for nothing. I am not a conspirator. In the Devil's name listen to me. Do you not hear what I am saying? Answer me, or I will set off for Paris, and will complain to the king, to the National Assembly, to everybody."

In those days the king was always mentioned before the people.

"Yes, my dear Monsieur Billot, we hear you, and we are quite ready to do justice to your excellent reasoning. Come, now, tell us where is this book? And as we are now convinced that you have only that single copy, we will take it, and then we will withdraw, and all will be over."

"Well," replied Billot, "the book is in the possession of an honest lad to whom I have given it with the charge of carrying it to a friend."

"And what is the name of this honest lad?" asked the gentleman in black, in an insinuating tone.

"Ange Pitou; he is a poor orphan whom I have taken into my house from charity, and who does not even know the subject of this book."

"Thanks, dear Monsieur Billot," said the exempt.

They threw the linen back into the wardrobe, and locked it up again, but the casket was not there.

"And where is this amiable youth to be found?"

"I think I saw him as I returned, somewhere near the bed of scarlet-runners, close to the arbor. Go, take the book from him; but take care not to do him any injury."

"Injury! Oh, my dear Monsieur Billot, how little you know us! We would not harm even a fly."

And they went towards the indicated spot. When they got near the scarlet-runners they perceived Pitou, whose tall stature made him appear more formidable than he was in reality. Thinking that the two sergeants would stand in need of his assistance to master the young giant, the exempt had taken off his cloak, had rolled the casket in it, and had hid the whole in a secret corner, but where he could easily regain possession of it.

But Catherine, who had been listening with her ear glued, as it were, to the door, had vaguely heard the words *Book*, *Doctor*, and *Pitou*. Therefore, finding the storm she had predicted had burst upon them, she had formed the idea of attenuating its effects. It was then that she prompted Pitou to say that he was the owner of the book.

We have related what then passed regarding it: how Pitou, bound and handcuffed by the exempt and his acolytes, had been restored to liberty by Catherine, who had taken advantage of the moment when the two sergeants went into the house to fetch a table to write upon, and the gentleman in black to take his cloak and casket.

We have stated how Pitou made his escape by jumping over a hedge; but that which we did not state is, that, like a man of talent, the exempt had taken advantage of this flight.

And, in fact, the twofold mission intrusted to the exempt having been accomplished, the flight of Pitou afforded an excellent opportunity to the exempt and his two men to make their escape also.

The gentleman in black, although he knew he had not the slightest chance of catching the fugitive, excited the two sergeants by his vociferations and his example to such a degree, that on seeing them racing through the clover, the wheat, and Spanish trefoil fields, one would have imagined that they were the most inveterate enemies of Pitou, whose long legs they were most cordially blessing in their hearts.

But Pitou had scarcely gained the covert of the wood, when the confederates, who had not even passed the skirts of it, halted behind a bush. During their race they had been joined by two other sergeants, who had kept themselves concealed in the neighborhood of the farm, and who had been instructed not to show themselves unless summoned by their chief.

"Upon my word," said the exempt, "it is very well that our gallant young fellow had not the casket instead of the book, for we should have been obliged to hire post-horses to catch him. By Jupiter! those legs of his are not men's legs, but those of a stag."

"Yes," replied one of the sergeants, "but he has not got it, has he, Monsieur Wolfsfoot? for, on the contrary, 't is you who have it."

"Undoubtedly, my friend, and here it is," replied the exempt, whose name we have now given for the first time, or we should rather say the nickname which had been given to him on account of the lightness of his step and the stealthiness of his walk.

"Then we are entitled to the reward which was promised us," observed one of the sergeants.

"Here it is," said the exempt, taking from his pocket four golden louis, which he divided among his four sergeants, without any distinction as to those who had been actively engaged in the perquisition or those who had merely remained concealed.

"Long live the lieutenant of police!" cried the sergeants.

"There is no harm in crying 'Long live the lieutenant!'" said Wolfsfoot; "but every time you utter such exclamations you should do it with discernment. It is not the lieutenant who pays."

"Who is it, then?"

"Some gentleman or lady friend of his, I know not which, but who desires that his or her name may not be mentioned in the business."

"I would wager that it is the person who wishes for the casket," said one of the sergeants.

"Hear now, Rigold, my friend," said the gentleman in black; "I have always affirmed that you are a lad replete with perspicacity, but until the day when this perspicacity shall produce its fruits by being amply recompensed, I advise you to be silent. What we have now to do is to make the best of our way on foot out of this neighborhood. That damned farmer has not the appearance of being conciliatory, and as soon as he discovers that the casket is missing, he will despatch all his farm laborers in pursuit of us, and they are fellows who can aim a gun as truly as any of his Majesty's Swiss guards."

This opinion was doubtless that of the majority of the party, for they all five set off at once, and, continuing to remain within the border of the forest, which concealed them from all eyes, they rapidly pursued their way, until, after walking three quarters of a league, they came out upon the public road.

This precaution was not a useless one, for Catherine had scarcely seen the gentleman in black and his two attendants disappear in pursuit of Pitou, than, full of confidence in the agility of him whom they pursued, who, unless some accident happened to him, would lead them a long dance, she called the husbandmen, who were well aware that something strange was going on, although they were ignorant of the positive facts, to tell them to open her door for her.

The laborers instantly obeyed her, and Catherine, again free, hastened to set her father at liberty.

Billot appeared to be in a dream. Instead of at once rushing out of the room, he seemed to walk mistrustfully, and returned from the door into the middle of the apartment. It might have been imagined that he did not dare to remain in the same spot, and yet that he was afraid of casting his eyes upon the articles of furniture which had been broken open and emptied by the sergeants.

"But," cried he on seeing his daughter, "tell me, did they take the book from him?"

"I believe so, Father," she replied, "but they did not take him."

"Whom do you mean?"

"Pitou; he has escaped from them, and they are still running after him. They must already have got to Cayolles or Vauciennes."

"So much the better! Poor fellow! It is I who have brought this upon him."

"Oh, Father, do not feel uneasy about him, but think only of what we have to do! Pitou, you may rest assured, will get out of this scrape. But what disorder! good heaven! only look, mother."

"Oh, my linen wardrobe!" cried Madame Billot;

"they have not even respected my linen wardrobe! What villains they must be!"

"They have searched the wardrobe where the linen was kept!" exclaimed Billot.

And he rushed towards the wardrobe, which the exempt, as we have before stated, had carefully closed again, and plunged his hands into piles of towels and table napkins, all confusedly huddled together.

"Oh," cried he, "it cannot be possible!"

"What are you looking for, Father?" inquired Catherine.

Billot gazed around him as if completely bewildered.

"Search, — search if you can see it anywhere! But no; not in that chest-of-drawers, — not in that secretary. Besides, it was there, — there; it was I myself who put it there. I saw it there only yesterday. It was not the book they were seeking for, — the wretches! — but the casket!"

"What casket?" asked Catherine.

"Why, you know well enough."

"What! Doctor Gilbert's casket?" inquired Madame Billot, who always, in matters of transcendent importance, allowed others to speak and act.

"Yes, Doctor Gilbert's casket!" cried Billot, plunging his fingers into his thick hair; "that casket which was so precious to him."

"You terrify me, my dear father," said Catherine.

"Unfortunate man that I am!" cried Billot, with furious anger; "and I, who had not in the slightest imagined such a thing, — I, who did not even for a moment think of that casket! Oh, what will the doctor say? What will he think of me? That I am a traitor, a coward, a miserable wretch!"

"But, good heaven! what did this casket contain, Father?"

"I do not know; but this I know, that I had engaged, even at the hazard of my life, to keep it safe; and I ought to have allowed myself to be killed in order to defend it."

And Billot made a gesture of such despair, that his wife and daughter started back with terror.

"Oh God! oh God! are you losing your reason, my poor father?" said Catherine.

And she burst into tears.

"Answer me, then," she cried; "for the love of Heaven, answer me!"

"Pierre, my friend," said Madame Billot, "answer your daughter; answer your wife."

"My horse! my horse!" cried the farmer; "bring out my horse!"

"Where are you going, Father?"

"To let the doctor know. The doctor must be informed of this."

"But where will you find him?"

"At Paris. Did you not read in the letter he wrote to us that he was going to Paris? He must be there by this time. I will go to Paris. My horse! my horse!"

"And you will leave us thus, my dear father? You will leave us in such a moment as this? You will leave us full of anxiety and anguish?"

"It must be so, my child; it must be so," said the farmer, taking his daughter's face between his hands and convulsively fixing his lips upon it. "'If ever you should lose this casket,' said the doctor to me, 'or rather, should it ever be surreptitiously taken from you, the instant you discover the robbery, set off at once, Billot, and inform me of it, wherever I may be. Let nothing stop you, not even the life of a man.'"

"Good Lord! what can this casket contain?"

"Of that I know nothing; all that I know is, that it was placed under my care, and that I have allowed it to be taken from me. Ah, here is my horse! From the son, who is at college, I shall learn where to find the father."

And kissing his wife and daughter for the last time, the farmer jumped into his saddle, and galloped across the country, in the direction of the high-road to Paris.

CHAPTER IX.

THE ROAD TO PARIS.

Let us return to Pitou.

Pitou was urged onwards by the two most powerful stimulants known in this great world, — Fear and Love.

Fear whispered to him in direct terms : —

"You may be either arrested or beaten ; take care of yourself, Pitou !"

And that sufficed to make him run as swiftly as a roebuck.

Love had said to him, in the voice of Catherine : —

"Escape quickly, my dear Pitou !"

And Pitou had escaped.

These two stimulants combined, as we have said, had such an effect upon him, that Pitou did not merely run : Pitou absolutely flew.

How useful did Pitou's long legs, which appeared to be knotted to him, and his enormous knees, which looked so ungainly in a ballroom, prove to him in the open country, when his heart, enlarged with terror, beat three pulsations in a second.

Monsieur de Charny, with his small feet, his elegantly formed knees, and his symmetrically shaped calves, could not have run at such a rate as that.

Pitou recalled to his mind that pretty fable, in which a stag is represented weeping over his slim shanks, reflected in a fountain ; and although he did not bear on his forehead the ornament which the quadruped deemed

some compensation for his slender legs, he reproached himself for having so much despised his *stilts*.

For such was the appellation which Madame Billot gave to Pitou's legs when Pitou looked at them standing before a looking-glass.

Pitou, therefore, continued making his way through the wood, leaving Cayolles on his right and Yvors on his left, turning round at every corner of a bush, to see, or rather to listen; for it was long since he had seen anything of his persecutors, who had been distanced at the outset by the brilliant proof of swiftness Pitou had given, in placing a space of at least a thousand yards between them and himself, — a distance which he was increasing every moment.

Why was Atalanta married? Pitou would have entered the lists with her; and to have excelled Hippomenes he would not assuredly have needed to employ, as he did, the subterfuge of the three golden apples.

It is true, as we have already said, that Monsieur Wolfsfoot's agents, delighted at having possession of their booty, cared not a fig as to what became of Pitou; but Pitou knew not this.

Ceasing to be pursued by the reality, he continued to be pursued by the shadows.

As to the black-clothed gentlemen, they had that confidence in themselves which renders human beings lazy.

"Run! run!" cried they, thrusting their hands into their pockets, and making the reward which Monsieur Wolfsfoot had given them jingle in them: "run, good fellow, run; we can always find you again, should we want you."

Which, we may say in passing, far from being a vain boast, was the precise truth.

And Pitou continued to run as if he had heard the *aside* of Monsieur Wolfsfoot's agents.

When he had, by scientifically altering his course, and turning and twisting as do the wild denizens of the forest to throw the hounds off scent, when he had doubled and turned so as to form such a maze that Nimrod himself would not have been able to unravel it, he at once made up his mind as to his route, and taking a sharp turn to the right, went in a direct line to the high road which leads from Villers-Cotterets to Paris, from the hill near Gondreville Heaths.

Having formed this resolution, he bounded through the copse, and after running for a little more than a quarter of an hour, he perceived the road enclosed by its yellow sand and bordered with its green trees.

An hour after his departure from the farm he was on the king's highway.

He had run about four leagues and a half during that hour; as much as any rider could expect from an active horse, going a good round trot.

He cast a glance behind him. There was nothing on the road.

He cast a glance before him. There were two women upon asses.

Pitou had got hold of a small work on mythology, with engravings, belonging to young Gilbert; mythology was much studied in those days.

The history of the gods and goddesses of the Grecian Olympus formed part of the education of young persons. By dint of looking at the engravings Pitou had become acquainted with mythology. He had seen Jupiter metamorphose himself into a bull, to carry off Europa; into a swan, that he might approach and make love to the daughter of King Tyndarus. He had, in short, seen

other gods transforming themselves into forms more or less picturesque; but that one of his Majesty's police-officers should have transformed himself into an ass had never come within the scope of his erudition. King Midas himself had never had anything of the animal but the ears, — and he was a king, — he made gold at will, — he had therefore money enough to purchase the whole skin of the quadruped.

Somewhat reassured by what he saw, or rather by what he did not see, Pitou threw himself down on the grassy bank of the roadside, wiped with his sleeve his broad red face, and thus luxuriously reclining on the fresh clover, he yielded himself up to the satisfaction of perspiring in tranquillity.

But the sweet emanations from the clover and marjoram could not make Pitou forget the pickled pork made by Madame Billot, and the quarter of a six-pound loaf which Catherine allotted to him at every meal, — that is to say, three times a day.

This bread at that time cost four sous and a half a pound, a most exorbitant price, equivalent at least to nine sous in our days, and was so scarce throughout France that when it was eatable, it passed for the fabulous *brioche*,[1] which the Duchess of Polignac advised the Parisians to feed upon when flour should altogether fail them.

Pitou therefore said to himself philosophically that Mademoiselle Catherine was the most generous princess in the world, and that Father Billot's farm was the most sumptuous palace in the universe.

Then, as the Israelites on the banks of the Jordan, he turned a dying eye towards the east, that is to say,

[1] A sort of dry cake made of flour, eggs, and saffron, which the Parisians eat with their coffee and milk. — TRANSLATOR.

in the direction of that thrice happy farm, and sighed heavily.

But sighing is not so disagreeable an operation to a man who stands in need of taking breath after a violent race.

Pitou breathed more freely when sighing, and he felt his ideas, which for a time had been much confused and agitated, return to him gradually with his breath.

"Why is it," reasoned he with himself, "that so many extraordinary events have happened to me in so short a space of time? Why should I have met with more accidents within the last three days than during the whole course of my previous life?

"It is because I dreamed of a cat that wanted to fly at me," continued Pitou.

And he made a gesture signifying that the source of all his misfortunes had been thus already pointed out to him.

"Yes," added he, after a moment's reflection, "but this is not the logic of my venerable friend the Abbé Fortier. It is not because I dreamed of an irritated cat that all these adventures have happened to me. Dreams are only given to a man as a sort of warning, and this is why an author said, 'Thou hast been dreaming, beware! — *Cave, somniasti!*'

"*Somniasti*," said Pitou, doubtingly, and with somewhat of alarm; "am I then again committing a barbarism? Oh, no; I am only making an elision; it was *somniavisti* which I should have said, in grammatical language.

"It is astonishing," cried Pitou, considering himself admiringly, "how well I understand Latin since I no longer study it!"

And after this glorification of himself, Pitou resumed his journey.

Pitou walked on very quickly, though he was much tranquillized. His pace was somewhere about two leagues an hour.

The result of this was that two hours after he had recommenced his walk Pitou had got beyond Nanteuil, and was getting on towards Dammartin.

Suddenly the ears of Pitou, as acute as those of an Osage Indian, were struck with the distant sound of a horse's feet upon the paved road.

"Oh," cried Pitou, scanning the celebrated verse of Virgil, —

"'Quadrupedante putrem sonitu quatit ungula campum.'"

And he looked behind him.

But he saw nothing.

Could it be the asses which he had passed at Levignon, and which had now come on at a gallop? No: for the iron hoof, as the poet calls it, rang upon the paved road; and Pitou, whether at Haramont or at Villers-Cotterets, had never known an ass, excepting that of Mother Sabot, that was shod, and even this was because Mother Sabot performed the duty of letter-carrier between Villers-Cotterets and Crespy.

He therefore momentarily forgot the noise he had heard, to return to his reflections.

Who could these men in black be who had questioned him about Doctor Gilbert, who had tied his hands, who had pursued him, and whom he had at length so completely distanced?

Where could these men have sprung from, for they were altogether unknown in the district?

What could they have in particular to do with Pitou, — he who had never seen them, and who, consequently, did not know them?

How then was it, as he did not know them, that they had known him? Why had Mademoiselle Catherine told him to set off for Paris; and why, in order to facilitate his journey, had she given him a louis of forty-eight francs, — that is to say, two hundred and forty pounds of bread, at four sous a pound. Why, it was enough to supply him with food for eighty days, or three months, if he would stint his rations somewhat.

Could Mademoiselle Catherine suppose that Pitou was to remain eighty days absent from the farm?

Pitou suddenly started.

"Oh! oh!" he exclaimed, "again that horse's hoofs."

"This time," said Pitou, all on the alert, "I am not mistaken. The noise I hear is positively that of a horse galloping. I shall see it when he gets to the top of yon hill."

Pitou had scarcely spoken when a horse appeared at the top of a hill he had just left behind him, that is to say, at the distance of about four hundred yards from the spot on which he stood.

Pitou, who would not allow that a police agent could have transmogrified himself into an ass, admitted at once that he might have got on horseback to regain the prey that had escaped him.

Terror, from which he had been for some time relieved, again seized on Pitou, and immediately his legs became even longer and more intrepid than when he had made such marvellous good use of them some two hours previously.

Therefore, without reflecting, without looking behind, without even endeavoring to conceal his flight, calculating on the excellence of his steel-like sinews, Pitou, with a tremendous leap, sprang across the ditch which ran by the roadside, and began a rapid course across the country

in the direction of Ermenonville. Pitou did not know anything of Ermenonville, he only saw upon the horizon the summits of some tall trees, and he said to himself, —

"If I reach those trees, which are undoubtedly on the border of some forest, I am saved."

And he ran toward Ermenonville.

On this occasion he had to outvie a horse in running. Pitou had no longer legs, but wings.

And his rapidity was increased after having run some hundred yards, for Pitou had cast a glance behind him, and had seen the horseman oblige his horse to take the same immense leap which he had taken over the ditch by the roadside.

From that moment there could be no longer a doubt in the mind of the fugitive that the horseman was, in reality, in pursuit of him, and consequently the fugitive had increased his speed, never again turning his head, for fear of losing time. What most urged him on at that moment was not the clattering on the paved road, — that noise was deadened by the clover and the fallow fields; what most urged him on was a sort of cry which pursued him, the last syllable of his name pronounced by the horseman, a sort of hou ! hou ! which appeared to be uttered angrily, and which reached him on the wings of the wind, which he was endeavoring to outstrip.

But after having maintained this sharp race during ten minutes, Pitou began to feel that his chest became oppressed, — the blood rushed to his head, — his eyes began to wander. It seemed to him that his knees became more and more developed, — that his loins were filling with small pebbles. From time to time he stumbled over the furrows, — he who usually raised his feet so high, when running, that every nail in the soles of his shoes was visible.

At last the horse, created superior to man in the art of running, gained on the biped Pitou, and at the same time he heard the voice of the horseman, who no longer cried "Hou! hou!" but clearly and distinctly, "Pitou! Pitou!"

All was over. All was lost.

However, Pitou endeavored to continue the race. It had become a sort of mechanical movement; he rushed on, impelled by the power of repulsion. Suddenly, his knees failed him; he staggered and fell at full length, with his face to the ground.

But at the same time that he thus fell, fully resolved not to get up again, — at all events, of his own free will, — he received a lash from a horsewhip which wound round his loins.

With a tremendous oath, which was not unfamiliar to his ears, a well-known voice cried out to him, —

"How now, you stupid fellow! how now, you simpleton! have you sworn to founder Cadet?"

The name of Cadet at once dispelled all Pitou's suspense.

"Ah!" cried he, turning himself round, so that instead of lying upon his face he lay upon his back, — "Ah! I hear the voice of Monsieur Billot!"

It was in fact Goodman Billot. When Pitou was well assured of his identity, he assumed a sitting posture.

The farmer, on his side, had pulled up Cadet, covered with flakes of foam.

"Ah! dear Monsieur Billot," exclaimed Pitou, "how kind it is of you to ride in this way after me! I swear to you I should have returned to the farm after having expended the double louis Mademoiselle Catherine gave me. But since you are here, take back your double louis, — for of course it must be yours, — and let us return to the farm."

"A thousand devils!" exclaimed Billot; "who was thinking of the farm? Where are the *mouchards?*"

"The *mouchards?*" inquired Pitou, who did not comprehend the meaning of this word, which had only just been admitted into the vocabulary of our language.

"Yes, the *mouchards*,"[1] rejoined Billot; "the men in black. Do you not understand me?"

"Ah! the men in black! You will readily understand, my dear Monsieur Billot, that I did not amuse myself by waiting for them."

"Bravo! You have left them behind, then?"

"Why, I flatter myself I have; after the race I have run, it was to be expected, as it appears to me."

"Then, if you were so sure of your affair, what the devil made you run at such a rate?"

"Because I thought it was their chief, who, not to be outwitted, was pursuing me on horseback."

"Well, well! You are not quite so simple as I thought you. Then, as the road is clear, up! up! and away for Dammartin!"

"What do you mean by 'up, up'?"

"Yes, get up and come with me."

"We are going, then, to Dammartin?"

"Yes. I will borrow a horse, there, of old Lefranc. I will leave Cadet with him, for he can go no farther; and to-night we will push on to Paris."

"Be it so, Monsieur Billot; be it so."

"Well, then, up! — up!"

Pitou made an effort to obey him.

"I should much wish to do as you desire," said he, "but, my dear Monsieur Billot, I cannot."

"How, — you cannot get up?"

[1] Spies, — common informers, — men who live by betraying others — TRANSLATOR.

"No."

"But just now you could manage to turn round."

"Oh, just now! that was by no means astonishing. I heard your voice, and at the same moment I received a swingeing cut across the back. But such things can only succeed once. At present, I am accustomed to your voice; and as to your whip, I feel well assured that you can only apply it to managing our poor Cadet, who is almost as heated as I am."

Pitou's logic, which, after all, was nothing more than the Abbé Fortier's, persuaded, and even affected, the farmer.

"I have not time to sympathize in your fate," said he to Pitou; "but, come now, make an effort and get up behind me."

"Why," said Pitou, "that would be, indeed, the way to founder Cadet at once, poor beast!"

"Pooh! in half an hour we shall be at old Lefranc's."

"But it appears to me, dear Monsieur Billot," said Pitou, "that it would be altogether useless for me to go with you to old Lefranc's."

"And why so?"

"Because, although you have business at Dammartin, I have no business there, — not I."

"Yes; but I want you to come to Paris with me. In Paris you will be of use to me. You have good stout fists; and I am certain it will not be long before hard knocks will be given there."

"Ah! ah!" cried Pitou, not much delighted with this prospect; "do you believe that?"

And he managed to get on Cadet's back, Billot dragging him up as he would a sack of flour.

The good farmer soon got on the high-road again, and so well managed his bridle, whip, and spurs, that in

less than half an hour, as he had said, they reached Dammartin.

Billot had entered the town by a narrow lane, which was well known to him. He soon arrived at Father Lefranc's farm-house; and leaving Pitou and Cadet in the middle of the farm-yard, he ran straight to the kitchen, where Father Lefranc, who was setting out to take a turn round his fields, was buttoning on his gaiters.

"Quick! — quick! my friend," cried Billot, before Lefranc had recovered from the astonishment which his arrival had produced; "the strongest horse you have!"

"That is Margot," replied Lefranc; "and fortunately she is already saddled; I was going out."

"Well, Margot be it, then; only it is possible I may founder her, and of that I forewarn you."

"What, founder Margot! and why so, I ask?"

"Because it is necessary that I should be in Paris this very night."

And he made a masonic sign to Lefranc, which was most significant.

"Well, founder Margot if you will," said old Lefranc; "you shall give me Cadet, if you do."

"Agreed."

"A glass of wine?"

"Two."

"But it seemed to me that you were not alone?"

"No; I have a worthy lad there whom I am taking with me, and who is so fatigued that he had not the strength to come in here. Send out something to him."

"Immediately, immediately," said the farmer.

In ten minutes the two old comrades had each managed to soak in a bottle of good wine, and Pitou had bolted a two-pound loaf, with half a pound of bacon.

While he was eating, one of the farm-servants, a good fellow, rubbed him down with a handful of clean straw, to take the mud from his clothes, and with as much care as if he had been cleaning a favorite horse.

Thus freshened up and invigorated, Pitou had also some wine given to him, taken from a third bottle, which was the sooner emptied from Pitou's having his share of it; after which Billot mounted Margot, and Pitou, stiff as a pair of compasses, was lifted on behind him.

The poor beast, being thereunto urged by whip and spur, trotted off bravely, under this double load, on the road to Paris, and without ceasing whisked away the flies with its formidable tail, the thick hair of which threw the dust of the road on Pitou's back, and every now and then lashed his calfless legs, which were exposed to view, his stockings having fallen down to his ankles.

CHAPTER X.

WHAT WAS HAPPENING AT THE END OF THE ROAD WHICH PITOU WAS TRAVELLING UPON, — THAT IS TO SAY, AT PARIS.

It is eight leagues from Dammartin to Paris. The four first leagues were tolerably well got over; but after they reached Bourget, poor Margot's legs at length began to grow somewhat stiff. Night was closing in.

On arriving at La Villette, Billot thought he perceived a great light extending over Paris.

He made Pitou observe the red light, which rose above the horizon.

"You do not see, then," said Pitou to him, "that there are troops bivouacking, and that they have lighted their fires."

"What mean you by troops?" cried Billot.

"There are troops here," said Pitou; "why should there not be some farther on?"

And, in fact, on examining attentively, Father Billot saw, on looking to the right, that the plain of St. Denis was dotted over with black-looking detachments of infantry and cavalry, which were marching silently in the darkness.

Their arms glistened occasionally with the pale reflection of the stars.

Pitou, whose nocturnal excursions in the woods had accustomed him to see clearly in the dark, — Pitou pointed out to his master pieces of artillery, which had sunk up to the axles in the middle of the muddy plain.

"Oh! oh!" cried Billot, "there is something new up yonder, then! Let us make haste! Let us make haste!"

"Yes, yes; there is a fire out yonder," said Pitou, who had raised himself on Margot's back. "Look! — look! Do you not see the sparks?"

Margot stopped. Billot jumped off her back, and approaching a group of soldiers in blue and yellow uniform, who were bivouacking under the trees by the road-side, "Comrades," said he to them, "can you tell me what there is going on at Paris?"

But the soldiers merely replied to him by oaths, which they uttered in the German language.

"What the devil is it they say?" inquired Billot, addressing Pitou.

"It is not Latin, dear Monsieur Billot," replied Pitou, trembling; "and that is all I can tell you."

Billot reflected, and looked again.

"Simpleton that I was," said he, "to attempt to question these *Kaiserliks*."

And in his curiosity he remained motionless in the middle of the road.

An officer went up to him.

"Bass on your roat," said he; "bass on quickly."

"Your pardon, Captain," replied Billot; "but I am going to Paris."

"Vell, mein Gott; vot den?"

"And as I see that you are drawn up across the road, I fear that we cannot get through the barriers."

"You can get drough."

And Billot remounted his mare and went on.

But it was only to fall in the midst of the Bercheur Hussars, who encumbered the street of La Villette.

This time he had to deal with his own countrymen. He questioned them with more success.

"Sir," said he, "what has there happened at Paris, if you please?"

"That your headstrong Parisians," replied the hussar, "will have their Necker; and they are firing musket-shots at us, as if we had anything to do with the matter!"

"Have Necker!" exclaimed Billot. "They have lost him, then?"

"Assuredly, since the king has dismissed him."

"The king has dismissed Monsieur Necker!" exclaimed Billot, with the stupefaction of a devotee calling out against a sacrilege: "the king has dismissed that great man?"

"Oh, in faith he has, my worthy sir; and more than that, this great man is now on his road to Brussels."

"Well, then, in that case we shall see some fun," cried Billot, in a tremendous voice, without caring for the danger he was incurring by thus preaching insurrection in the midst of twelve or fifteen hundred royalist sabres.

And he again mounted Margot, spurring her on with cruel violence, until he reached the barrier.

As he advanced, he perceived that the fire was increasing and becoming redder. A long column of flame ascended from the barrier towards the sky.

It was the barrier itself that was burning.

A howling, furious mob, in which there were many women, who, as usual, threatened and vociferated more loudly than the men, were feeding the fire with pieces of wainscoting, and chairs and tables, and other articles of furniture belonging to the clerks employed to collect the city dues.[1]

[1] The city of Paris is encircled by a wall, and at every entrance to it is a custom-house, where people coming from the country are obliged to give an account of the produce, — poultry, meal, butter, eggs, etc., — and pay the city dues upon them. — TRANSLATOR.

Upon the road were Hungarian and German regiments, who, leaning upon their grounded arms, were looking on with vacant eyes at this scene of devastation.

Billot did not allow this rampart of flames to arrest his progress. He spurred on Margot through the fire. Margot rushed through the flaming ruins; but when she had reached the inner side of the barrier she was obliged to stop, being met by a crowd of people coming from the centre of the city, towards the suburbs. Some of them were singing, others shouting, "To arms!"

Billot had the appearance of being what he really was, a good farmer coming to Paris on his own affairs. Perhaps he cried out rather too loudly, "Make room! make room!" but Pitou repeated the words so politely, "Room if you please; let us pass!" that the one was a corrective of the other. No one had any interest in preventing Billot from going to his affairs, and he was allowed to pass.

Margot, during all this, had recovered her wind and strength; the fire had singed her coat. All these unaccustomed shouts appeared greatly to amaze her, and Billot was obliged to restrain the efforts she now made to advance, for fear of trampling under foot some of the numerous spectators whom curiosity had drawn together before their doors to see the gate on fire, and as many curious people who were running from their doors towards the burning toll-house.

Billot went on pushing through the crowd, pulling Margot first to the right and then to the left, twisting and turning in every direction, until they reached the Boulevard; but having got thus far he was obliged to stop.

A procession was then passing, coming from the Bastille, and going towards the place called the Garde

Meuble, those two masses of stone which in those days formed a girdle which attached the centre of the city to its outworks.

This procession, which obstructed the whole of the Boulevard, was following a bier; on this bier were borne two busts, — the one veiled with black crape, the other crowned with flowers.

The bust covered with black crape was that of Necker, a minister who had not been disgraced, but dismissed. The one crowned with flowers was that of the Duke of Orleans, who had openly espoused at court the party of the Genevese economist.

Billot immediately inquired what was the meaning of this procession. He was informed that it was a popular homage paid to M. Necker and to his defender, the Duke of Orleans.

Billot had been born in a part of the country where the name of the Duke of Orleans had been venerated for a century and a half. Billot belonged to the new sect of philosophers, and consequently considered Monsieur Necker not only as a great minister, but as an apostle of humanity.

This was more than sufficient to excite Billot. He jumped off his horse, without being exactly aware of what he was about to do, shouting, "Long live the Duke of Orleans! long live Necker!" and then mingled with the crowd. Having once got into the thick of the throng, all personal liberty was at an end at once; as every one knows, the use of our free will at once ceases. We wish what the crowd wishes, we do what it does. Billot, moreover, allowed himself the more easily to be drawn into this movement, from being near the head of the procession.

The mob kept on vociferating most strenuously, "Long

live Necker! no more foreign troops! Down with the foreign troops!"

Billot mingled his stentorian voice with all these voices.

A superiority, be it of whatsoever nature it may, is always appreciated by the people. The Parisian of the suburbs, with his faint hoarse voice, enfeebled by inanition or worn out by drinking, duly appreciated the full, rich, and sonorous voice of Billot, and readily made way for him, so that without being too much elbowed, too much pushed about, too much pressed by the crowd, Billot at length managed to get close up to the bier.

About ten minutes after this, one of the bearers, whose enthusiasm had been greater than his strength, yielded his place to Billot.

As has been seen, the honest farmer had rapidly obtained promotion.

The day before he had been merely the propagator of the principles contained in Doctor Gilbert's pamphlet, and now he had become one of the instruments of the great triumph of Necker and the Duke of Orleans.

But he had scarcely attained this post when an idea crossed his mind.

"What had become of Pitou, — what had become of Margot?"

Though carefully bearing his portion of the bier, he gave a glance behind him, and by the light of the torches which accompanied the procession, by the light of the lamps which illuminated every window, he perceived in the midst of the procession a sort of ambulating eminence, formed of five or six men, who were gesticulating and shouting.

Amidst these gesticulations and shouts it was easy to distinguish the voice and recognize the long arms of his follower, Pitou.

Pitou was doing all he could to protect Margot; but despite all his efforts Margot had been invaded. Margot no longer bore Billot and Pitou, a very honorable and sufficient burden for the poor animal.

Margot was bearing as many people as could manage to get upon her back, her croup, her neck; Margot looked in the obscurity of the night, which always magnifies the appearance of objects, like an elephant loaded with hunters going to attack a tiger.

Five or six furious fellows had taken possession of Margot's broad back, vociferating, "Long live Necker!" "Long live the Duke of Orleans!" "Down with the foreigners!" to which Pitou replied, —

"You will break Margot's back!"

The enthusiasm was general.

Billot for a moment entertained the idea of rushing to the aid of Pitou and poor Margot; but he reflected that if he should only for a moment resign the honor of carrying one of the corners of the bier, he would not be able to regain his triumphal post. Then he reflected that by the barter he had agreed to with old Lefranc, that of giving him Cadet for Margot, Margot belonged to him, and that, should any accident happen to Margot, it was, after all, but an affair of some three or four hundred livres, and that he, Billot, was undoubtedly rich enough to make the sacrifice of three or four hundred livres to his country.

During this time the procession kept on advancing; it had moved obliquely to the left, and had gone down the Rue Montmartre to the Place des Victoires. When it reached the Palais Royal some great impediment prevented its passing on. A troop of men with green leaves in their hats were shouting "To arms!"

It was necessary to reconnoitre. Were these men who

blocked up the Rue Vivienne friends, or enemies? Green was the color of the Count d'Artois. Why, then, these green cockades?

After a minute's conference all was explained.

On learning the dismissal of Necker, a young man had issued from the Café Foy, had jumped upon a table in the garden of the Palais Royal, and taking a pistol from his breast, had cried, "To arms!"

On hearing this cry, all the persons who were walking there had assembled round him, and had shouted, "To arms!"

We have already said that all the foreign regiments had been collected around Paris. One might have imagined that it was an invasion by the Austrians. The names of these regiments alarmed the ears of all Frenchmen; they were Reynac, Salis Samade, Diesbach, Esterhazy, Rœmer; the very naming of them was sufficient to make the crowd understand that they were the names of enemies. The young man named them; he announced that the Swiss were encamped in the Champs Élysées, with four pieces of artillery, and that they were to enter Paris the same night, preceded by the dragoons commanded by Prince Lambesq. He proposed a new cockade which was not theirs, snatched a leaf from a chestnut-tree and placed it in the band of his hat. Upon the instant every one present followed his example. Three thousand persons had in ten minutes unleaved the trees of the Palais Royal.

That morning no one knew the name of that young man; in the evening it was in every mouth.

That young man's name was Camille Desmoulins.

The two crowds recognized each other as friends; they fraternized, they embraced each other, and then the procession continued on its way.

During the momentary halt we have just described, the curiosity of those who had not been able to discover, even by standing on tiptoe, what was going on, had overloaded Margot with an increasing burden. Every inch on which a foot could be placed had been invaded, so that when the crowd again moved on, the poor beast was literally crushed by the enormous weight which overwhelmed her.

At the corner of the Rue Richelieu Billot cast a look behind him; Margot had disappeared.

He heaved a deep sigh, addressed to the memory of the unfortunate animal; then, soon recovering from his grief, and calling up the whole power of his voice, he three times called Pitou, as did the Romans of ancient times when attending the funeral of a relative. He imagined that he heard, issuing from the centre of the crowd, a voice which replied to his own, but that voice was lost among the confused clamors which ascended towards the heavens, half threatening, half with applauding acclamations.

The procession still moved on.

All the shops were closed; but all the windows were open, and from every window issued cries of encouragement which fell like blessings on the heads of those who formed this great ovation.

In this way they reached the Place Vendôme.

But on arriving there the procession was obstructed by an unforeseen obstacle.

Like to those trunks of trees rooted up by a river that has overflown its banks, and which, on encountering the piers of a bridge, recoil upon the wreck of matter which is following them, the popular army found a detachment of the Royal Germans on the Place Vendôme.

These foreign soldiers were dragoons, who, seeing an

inundation streaming from the Rue St. Honoré, and which began to overflow the Place Vendôme, loosened their horses' reins, who, impatient at having been stationed there during five hours, at once galloped furiously forward, charging upon the people.

The bearers of the bier received the first shock, and were thrown down beneath their burden. A Savoyard, who was walking before Billot, was the first to spring to his feet again; he raised the effigy of the Duke of Orleans, and placing it on the top of a stick, held it above his head, crying, —

"Long live the Duke of Orleans!" whom he had never seen; and "Long live Necker!" whom he did not know.

Billot was about to do as much for the bust of Necker, but found himself forestalled. A young man, about twenty-four or twenty-five years old, and sufficiently well-dressed to deserve the title of a beau, had followed it with his eyes, which he could do more easily than Billot, who was carrying it; and as soon as the bust had fallen to the ground, he had rushed towards it and seized upon it.

The good farmer therefore vainly endeavored to find it on the ground; the bust of Necker was already on the point of a sort of pike, and, side by side with that of the Duke of Orleans, rallied around them a good portion of the procession.

Suddenly a great light illuminates the square; at the same moment a peal of musketry is heard; balls whiz through the air; something heavy strikes Billot on the forehead; he falls. At first, Billot imagined himself killed.

But as his senses had not abandoned him, as, excepting a violent pain in the head, he felt no other injury,

Billot comprehended that he was, even at the worst, but wounded. He pressed his hand to his forehead, to ascertain the extent of damage he had received, and perceived at one and the same time that he had only a contusion on the head, and that his hands were streaming with blood.

The elegantly dressed young man who had supplanted Billot had received a ball full in his breast. It was he who was shot. The blood on Billot's hands was his. The blow which Billot had experienced was from the bust of Necker, which, losing its supporter, had fallen upon his head.

Billot utters a cry, partly of anger, partly of terror.

He draws back from the young man, who was convulsed in the agonies of death. Those who surrounded him also draw back; and the shout he had uttered, repeated by the crowd, is prolonged like a funeral echo by the groups assembled in the Rue St. Honoré.

This shout was a second rebellion.

A second detonation was then heard, and immediately deep vacancies hollowed in the mass attested the passage of the murderous projectiles.

To pick up the bust, the whole face of which was stained with blood; to raise it above his head, and protest against this outrage with his sonorous voice, at the risk of being shot down, as had been the handsome young man whose body was then lying at his feet, was what Billot's indignation prompted him to effect, and which he did in the first moment of his enthusiasm.

But at the same instant a large and powerful hand was placed upon the farmer's shoulder, and with so much vigor that he was compelled to bend down beneath its weight. The farmer wishes to relieve himself from this pressure; another hand, no less heavy than the first, falls

on his other shoulder. He turned round, reddening with anger, to ascertain what sort of antagonist he had to contend with.

"Pitou!" he exclaimed.

"Yes, yes," replied Pitou. "Down! down! and you will soon see."

And redoubling his efforts, he managed to drag with him to the ground the opposing farmer.

No sooner had he forced Billot to lie down flat upon the pavement, than another discharge was heard. The Savoyard who was carrying the bust of the Duke of Orleans gave way in his turn, struck by a ball in the thigh.

Then was heard the crushing of the pavement beneath the horses' hoofs; then the dragoons charged a second time; a horse, with streaming mane, and furious as that of the Apocalypse, bounds over the unfortunate Savoyard, who feels the cold steel of a lance penetrate his breast. He falls on Billot and Pitou.

The tempest rushed onward towards the end of the street, spreading, as it passed, terror and death. Dead bodies alone remained on the pavement of the square. All those who had formed the procession fled through the adjacent streets. The windows are instantly closed, — a gloomy silence succeeds to the shouts of enthusiasm and the cries of anger.

Billot waited a moment, still restrained by the prudent Pitou; he felt that the danger was becoming more distant with the noise, while Pitou, like a hare in its bed, was beginning to raise, not his head, but his ears.

"Well, Monsieur Billot," said Pitou, "I think that you spoke truly, and that we have arrived here in the nick of time."

"Come, now, help me!"

"And what to do, — to run away?"

"No. The young dandy is dead as a door-nail, but the poor Savoyard, in my opinion, has only fainted. Help me to put him on my back. We cannot leave him here, to be finished by those damned Germans."

Billot spoke a language which went straight to Pitou's heart. He had no answer to make but to obey. He took up the fainting and bleeding body of the poor Savoyard, and threw him, as he would have done a sack, across the shoulders of the robust farmer; who, seeing that the Rue St. Honoré was free, and to all appearance deserted, advanced with Pitou towards the Palais Royal.

CHAPTER XI.

THE NIGHT BETWEEN THE 12TH AND 13TH OF JULY.

THE street had, in the first place, appeared empty and deserted to Billot and Pitou, because the dragoons, being engaged in the pursuit of the great body of the fugitives, had turned into the market of St. Honoré, and had followed them up the Rue Louis-le-Grand and the Rue Gaillon. But as Billot advanced towards the Palais Royal, roaring instinctively, but in a subdued voice, the word "Vengeance!" men made their appearance at the corners of the streets, at the end of alleys, and from under the carriage gateways, who, at first, mute and terrified, looked around them, but being at length assured of the absence of the dragoons, brought up the rear of this funereal march, repeating, first in hollow whispers, but soon aloud, and finally with shouts, the word "Vengeance! vengeance!"

Pitou walked behind the farmer, carrying the Savoyard's black cap in his hand.

They arrived thus, in gloomy and fearful procession, upon the square before the Palais Royal, where a whole people, drunk with rage, was holding council, and soliciting the support of French soldiers against the foreigners.

"Who are these men in uniform?" inquired Billot, on arriving in front of a company who were standing with grounded arms, stopping the passage across the square, from the gate of the palace to the Rue de Chartres.

"They are the French Guards!" cried several voices.

"Ah!" exclaimed Billot, approaching them, and showing them the body of the Savoyard, which was now a lifeless corpse, — "Ah! you are Frenchmen, and you allow us to be murdered by these Germans!"

The French Guards drew back with horror.

"Dead?" murmured a voice from within their ranks.

"Yes, dead! dead! assassinated! — he and many more besides!"

"And by whom?"

"By the Royal German Dragoons. Did you not hear the cries, the firing, the galloping of their horses?"

"Yes, yes, we did!" cried two or three hundred voices. "They were butchering the people on the Place Vendôme!"

"And you are part of the people, by Heaven, you are!" cried Billot, addressing the soldiers. "It is therefore cowardly in you to allow your brothers to be butchered."

"Cowardly!" exclaimed several threatening voices in the ranks.

"Yes, cowardly! I have said it, and I repeat the word. Come, now," continued Billot, advancing three steps towards the spot from whence these murmurs had proceeded; "well, now, will you not kill me, in order to prove that you are not cowards?"

"Good! that is all well, very well," said one of the soldiers. "You are a brave fellow, my friend. You are a citizen, and can do what you will; but a military man is a soldier, do you see, and he must obey orders."

"So that," replied Billot, "if you received orders to fire upon us, — that is to say, upon unarmed men, — you would fire, you who have succeeded the men of Fontenoy, who gave the advantage to the English by telling them to fire first!"

"As to me, I know that I would not fire, for one," said a voice from the ranks.

"Nor I! — Nor I!" repeated a hundred voices.

"Then see that others do not fire upon us," cried Billot. "To allow the Germans to butcher us is just the same thing as if you slaughtered us yourselves."

"The dragoons! the dragoons!" cried several voices at the same time that the crowd, driven backwards, began to throng the square, flying by the Rue de Richelieu.

And there was heard the distant sound of the galloping of heavy cavalry upon the pavement, but which became louder at every moment.

"To arms! to arms!" cried the fugitives.

"A thousand gods!" cried Billot, throwing the dead body of the Savoyard upon the ground, which he had till then held in his arms; "give us your muskets, at least, if you will not yourselves make use of them."

"Well, then, yes; by a thousand thunders, we will make use of them!" said the soldier to whom Billot had addressed himself, snatching out of his hand his musket, which the other had already seized. "Come, come! let us bite our cartridges, and if the Austrians have anything to say to these brave fellows, we shall see!"

"Yes, yes, we 'll see!" cried the soldiers, putting their hands into their cartouche-boxes and biting off the ends of their cartridges.

"Oh, thunder!" cried Billot, stamping his feet; "and to think that I have not brought my fowling-piece! But perhaps one of those rascally Austrians will be killed, and then I will take his carbine."

"In the mean time," said a voice, "take this carbine; it is ready loaded."

And at the same time an unknown man slipped a richly mounted carbine into Billot's hands.

At that instant the dragoons galloped into the square, riding down and sabring all that were in their way.

The officer who commanded the French Guards advanced four steps.

"Hillos, there, gentlemen dragoons!" cried he; "halt there, if you please!"

Whether the dragoons did not hear, or whether they did not choose to hear, or whether they could not at once arrest the violent course of their horses, they rode across the square, making a half-wheel to the right, and ran over a woman and an old man, who disappeared beneath their horses' hoofs.

"Fire, then, fire!" cried Billot.

Billot was standing close to the officer. It might have been thought that it was the latter who had given the word.

The French Guards presented their guns, and fired a volley, which at once brought the dragoons to a stand.

"Why, gentlemen of the Guards," said a German officer, advancing in front of his disordered squadron, "do you know that you are firing upon us?"

"Do we not know it?" cried Billot; and he fired at the officer, who fell from his horse.

Then the French Guards fired a second volley, and the Germans, seeing that they had on this occasion to deal, not with plain citizens, who would fly at the first sabre-cut, but with soldiers, who firmly waited their attack, turned to the right-about, and galloped back to the Place Vendôme, amidst so formidable an explosion of bravoes and shouts of triumph, that several of their horses, terrified at the noise, ran off with their riders, and knocked their heads against the closed shutters of the shops.

"Long live the French Guards!" cried the people.

"Long live the soldiers of the country!" cried Billot.

"Thanks," replied the latter. "We have smelt gunpowder, and we are now baptized."

"And I, too," said Pitou, "I have smelt gunpowder."

"And what do you think of it?" inquired Billot.

"Why, really, I do not find it so disagreeable as I had expected," replied Pitou.

"But now," said Billot, who had had time to examine the carbine, and had ascertained that it was a weapon of some value, "but now, to whom belongs this gun?"

"To my master," said the voice which had already spoken behind him. "But my master thinks that you make too good use of it to take it back again."

Billot turned round, and perceived a huntsman in the livery of the Duke of Orleans.

"And where is your master?" said he.

The huntsman pointed to a half-open Venetian blind, behind which the prince had been watching all that had passed.

"Your master is then on our side?" asked Billot.

"With the people, heart and soul," replied the huntsman.

"In that case, once more, 'Long live the Duke of Orleans!'" cried Billot. "My friends, the Duke of Orleans is with us. Long live the Duke of Orleans!"

And he pointed to the blind behind which the prince stood.

Then the blind was thrown completely open, and the Duke of Orleans bowed three times.

After which the blind was again closed.

Although of such short duration, his appearance had wound up the enthusiasm of the people to its acme.

"Long live the Duke of Orleans!" vociferated two or three thousand voices.

"Let us break open the armorers' shops!" cried a voice in the crowd.

"Let us run to the Invalides!" cried some old soldiers. "Sombreuil has twenty thousand muskets."

"To the Invalides!"

"To the Hôtel de Ville!" exclaimed several voices. "Flesselles the provost of the merchants, has the key of the depôt in which the arms of the Guards are kept. He will give them to us."

"To the Hôtel de Ville!" cried a fraction of the crowd.

And the whole crowd dispersed, taking the three directions which had been pointed out.

During this time the dragoons had ra lied round the Baron de Besenval and the Prince de Lambesq, on the Place Louis XV.

Of this Billot and Pitou were ignorant. They had not followed either of the three troops of citizens, and they found themselves almost alone in the square before the Palais Royal.

"Well, dear Monsieur Billot, where are we to go next, if you please?" said Pitou.

"Why," replied Billot, "I should have desired to follow those worthy people, — not to the gunmakers' shops, since I have such a beautiful carbine, but to the Hôtel de Ville or to the Invalides. However, not having come to Paris to fight, but to find out the address of Doctor Gilbert, it appears to me that I ought to go to the College of Louis-le-Grand, where his son now is; and then, after having seen the doctor, why, we can throw ourselves again into this seething whirlpool." And the eyes of the farmer flashed lightning.

"To go in the first place to the College of Louis-le-Grand appears to me quite logical," sententiously

observed Pitou; "since it was for that purpose that we came to Paris."

"Go, get a musket, a sabre, a weapon of some kind or other from some one or other of those idle fellows who are lying on the pavement yonder," said Billot, pointing to one out of five or six dragoons who were stretched upon the ground; "and let us at once go to the college."

"But these arms," said Pitou, hesitating, "they are not mine."

"Who, then, do they belong to?" asked Billot.

"To the king."

"They belong to the people," rejoined Billot.

And Pitou, yielding implicitly to the opinion of the farmer, whom he knew to be a man who would not rob a neighbor of a grain of millet, approached with every necessary precaution the dragoon who happened to be the nearest to him, and after having assured himself that he was really dead, took from him his sabre, his musketoon, and his cartouche-box.

Pitou had a great desire to take his helmet also, only he was not quite certain that what Father Billot had said with regard to offensive weapons extended to defensive accoutrements.

But while thus arming himself, Pitou directed his ears towards the Place Vendôme.

"Ho, ho!" said he, "it appears to me that the Royal Germans are coming this way again."

And in fact the noise of a troop of horsemen returning at a foot-pace could be heard. Pitou peeped from behind the corner of the coffee-house called La Regence, and perceived, at about the distance of the market of St. Honoré, a patrol of dragoons advancing, with their musketoons in hand.

"Oh, quick, quick!" cried Pitou, "here they are, coming back again."

Billot cast his eyes around him to see if there was any means of offering resistance. There was scarcely a person in the square.

"Let us go, then," said he, "to the College Louis-le-Grand."

And he went up the Rue de Chartres, followed by Pitou, who, not knowing the use of the hook upon his belt, was dragging his long sabre after him.

"A thousand thunders!" exclaimed Billot; "why, you look like a dealer in old iron. Fasten me up that lath there."

"But how?" asked Pitou.

"Why, so, by Heaven! — there!" said Billot.

And he hooked Pitou's long sabre up to his belt, which enabled the latter to walk with more celerity than he could have done but for this expedient.

They pursued their way without meeting with any impediment, till they reached the Place Louis XV.; but there Billot and Pitou fell in with the column which had left them to proceed to the Invalides, and which had been stopped short in its progress.

"Well!" cried Billot, "what is the matter?"

"The matter is, that we cannot go across the Bridge Louis XV."

"But you can go along the quays."

"All passage is stopped that way, too."

"And across the Champs Élysées?"

"Also."

"Then let us retrace our steps, and go over the bridge at the Tuileries."

The proposal was a perfectly natural one, and the crowd, by following Billot, showed that they were eager

to accede to it. But they saw sabres gleaming half-way between them and the Tuileries Gardens. The quay was occupied by a squadron of dragoons.

"Why, these cursed dragoons are, then, everywhere," murmured the farmer.

"I say, my dear Monsieur Billot," said Pitou, "I believe that we are caught."

"Pshaw! they cannot catch five or six thousand men; and we are five or six thousand men, at least."

The dragoons on the quay were advancing slowly, it is true, at a very gentle walk; but they were visibly advancing.

"The Rue Royale still remains open to us. Come this way; come, Pitou."

Pitou followed the farmer as if he had been his shadow.

But a line of soldiers was drawn across the street, near the St. Honoré gate.

"Ah, ah!" muttered Billot; "you may be in the right, friend Pitou."

"Hum!" was Pitou's sole reply.

But this word expressed, by the tone in which it had been pronounced, all the regret which Pitou felt at not having been mistaken.

The crowd, by its agitation and its clamors, proved that it was not less sensible than Pitou of the position in which it was then placed.

And, in fact, by a skilful manœuvre, the Prince de Lambesq had surrounded not only the rebels, but also those who had been drawn there from mere curiosity, and by preventing all egress by the Bridge Louis XV., the quays, the Champs Élysées, the Rue Royale, and Les Feuillants, he had enclosed them in a bow of iron, the string of which was represented by the walls of the Tuileries Gardens, which it would be very difficult to

escalade, and the iron gate of the Pont Tournant, which it was almost impossible to force.

Billot reflected on their position; it certainly was not a favorable one; however, as he was a man of calm, cool mind, full of resources when in danger, he cast his eyes around him, and perceiving a pile of timber lying beside the river, —

"I have an idea," said he to Pitou: "come this way."

Pitou followed him, without asking him what the idea was.

Billot advanced towards the timber, and seizing the end of a large block, said to Pitou, "Help me to carry this."

Pitou, for his part, without questioning him as to his intentions, caught hold of the other end of the piece of timber. He had such implicit confidence in the farmer, that he would have gone down to the infernal regions with him, without even making any observation as to the length of the descent or the depth of the abyss.

They were soon upon the quay again, bearing a load which five or six men of ordinary strength would have found difficult to raise.

Strength is always a subject of admiration to the mob, and although so compactly huddled together, they made way for Billot and Pitou.

Then, as they felt convinced that the manœuvre which was being accomplished was one of general interest, some men walked before Billot, crying, "Make way! make way!"

"Tell me now, Father Billot," inquired Pitou, after having carried the timber some thirty yards, "are we going far?"

"As far as the gate of the Tuileries."

"Ho! ho!" cried the crowd, who at once divined his intention.

And it made way for them more eagerly even than before.

Pitou looked about him, and saw that the gate was not more than thirty paces distant.

"I can reach it," said he, with the brevity of a Pythagorean.

The labor was so much the easier to Pitou from five or six of the strongest of the crowd taking their share in the burden.

The result of this was a very notable acceleration in their progress.

In five minutes they had reached the iron gate.

"Come, now," cried Billot, "clap your shoulders to it, and all push together."

"Good!" said Pitou. "I understand it now. We have just made a warlike engine; the Romans used to call it a ram."

"Now, my boys," cried Billot, "once, twice, thrice!" And the joist, directed with a furious impetus, struck the lock of the gate with resounding violence.

The soldiers who were on guard in the interior of the garden hastened to resist this invasion. But at the third stroke the gate gave way, turning violently on its hinges, and through that gaping and gloomy mouth the crowd rushed impetuously.

From the movement that was then made, the Prince de Lambesq perceived at once that an opening had been effected which allowed the escape of those whom he had considered as his prisoners. He was furious with disappointment. He urged his horse forward in order the better to judge of the position of affairs. The dragoons who were drawn up behind him imagined that the order

had been given to charge, and they followed him. The horses, going off at full speed, could not be suddenly pulled up. The men, who wished to be revenged for the check they had received on the square before the Palais Royal, scarcely endeavored to restrain them.

The prince saw that it would be impossible to moderate their advance, and allowed himself to be borne away by it. A sudden shriek uttered by the women and children ascended to heaven crying for vengeance against the brutal soldiers.

A frightful scene then occurred, rendered still more terrific by the darkness. Those who were charged upon became mad with pain; those who charged them were mad with anger.

Then a species of defence was organized from the top of a terrace. Chairs were hurled down on the dragoons. The Prince de Lambesq, who had been struck on the head, replied by giving a sabre-cut to the person nearest to him, without considering that he was punishing an innocent man instead of a guilty one, and an old man more than seventy years of age fell beneath his sword.

Billot saw this man fall, and uttered a loud cry. In a moment his carbine was at his shoulder. A furrow of light for a moment illuminated the darkness, and the prince had then died, had not his horse, by chance, reared at the same instant.

The horse received the ball in his neck, and fell.

It was thought that the prince was killed; the dragoons then rushed into the Tuileries, pursuing the fugitives, and firing their pistols at them.

But the fugitives, having now a greater space, dispersed among the trees.

Billot quietly reloaded his carbine.

"In good faith, Pitou," said he, "I think that you were right. We really have arrived in the nick of time."

"If I should become a bold, daring fellow!" said Pitou, discharging his musketoon at the thickest group of the dragoons. "It seems to me not so difficult as I had thought."

"Yes," replied Billot; "but useless courage is not real courage. Come this way, Pitou, and take care that your sword does not get between your legs."

"Wait a moment for me, dear Monsieur Billot; if I should lose you I should not know which way to go. I do not know Paris as you do: I was never here before."

"Come along, come along," said Billot; and he went by the terrace by the water-side, until he had got ahead of the line of troops, which were advancing along the quay; but this time as rapidly as they could, to give their aid to the Lambesq dragoons, should such aid be necessary.

When they reached the end of the terrace, Billot seated himself on the parapet and jumped on to the quay.

Pitou followed his example.

CHAPTER XII.

WHAT OCCURRED DURING THE NIGHT OF THE 12TH JULY, 1789.

ONCE upon the quay, the two countrymen saw glittering on the bridge near the Tuileries the arms of another body of men, which in all probability was not a body of friends; they silently glided to the end of the quay and descended the bank which leads along the Seine.

The clock of the Tuileries was just then striking eleven.

When they had got beneath the trees which line the banks of the river, fine aspen-trees and poplars, which bathe their feet in its current; when they were lost to the sight of their pursuers, hid by their friendly foliage, the farmer and Pitou threw themselves upon the grass and opened a council of war.

The question was to know, — and this was suggested by the farmer, — whether they should remain where they were, that is to say, in safety, or comparatively so, or whether they should again throw themselves into the tumult and take their share of the struggle which was going on, and which appeared likely to be continued the greater part of the night.

The question being mooted, Billot awaited the reply of Pitou.

Pitou had risen very greatly in the opinion of the farmer, — in the first place, by the knowledge which he had shown the day before, and afterwards by the courage of which he had given such proofs during the evening.

Pitou instinctively felt this, but instead of being prouder for it, he was only the more grateful towards the good farmer. Pitou was naturally very humble.

"Monsieur Billot," said he, "it is evident that you are more brave and I less a poltroon than I imagined. Horace, who, however, was a very different man from us, with regard to poetry, at least, threw away his arms and ran off at the very first blow. As to me, I have still my musketoon, my cartridge-box, and my sabre, which proves that I am braver than Horace."

"Well, what are you driving at?"

"What I mean is this, dear Monsieur Billot, — that the bravest man in the world may be killed by a ball."

"And what then?" inquired the farmer.

"And then, my dear sir, thus it is: as you stated, on leaving your farm, that you were going to Paris for an important object — "

"Oh, confound it, that is true, for the casket!"

"Well, then, did you come about this casket, — yes, or no?"

"I came about the casket, by a thousand thunders! and for nothing else."

"If you should allow yourself to be killed by a ball, the affair for which you came cannot be accomplished."

"In truth, you are ten times right, Pitou."

"Do you hear that crashing noise — those cries?" continued Pitou, encouraged by the farmer's approbation; "wood is being torn like paper, iron is twisted as if it were but hemp."

"It is because the people are angry, Pitou."

"But it appears to me," Pitou ventured to say, "that the king is tolerably angry too."

"How say you, — the king?"

"Undoubtedly; the Austrians, the Germans, the Kaiserliks, as you call them, are the king's soldiers. Well, if they charge the people, it is the king who orders them to charge, and for him to give such an order, he must be angry too."

"You are both right and wrong, Pitou."

"That does not appear possible to me, Monsieur Billot, and I dare not say to you that had you studied logic, you would not venture on such a paradox."

"You are right and you are wrong, Pitou, and I will presently make you comprehend how this can be."

"I do not ask anything better, but I doubt it."

"See you now, Pitou, there are two parties at court, — that of the king, who loves the people, and that of the queen, who loves the Austrians?"

"That is because the king is a Frenchman, and the queen an Austrian," philosophically replied Pitou.

"Wait a moment. On the king's side are Monsieur Turgot and Monsieur Necker, on the queen's, Monsieur de Breteuil and the Polignacs. The king is not the master, since he has been obliged to send away Monsieur Turgot and Monsieur Necker. It is therefore the queen who is the mistress, the Breteuils and the Polignacs: therefore all goes badly.

"Do you see, Pitou, the evil proceeds from Madame Deficit, and Madame Deficit is in a rage, and it is in her name that the troops charge; the Austrians defend the Austrian woman, that is natural enough."

"Your pardon, Monsieur Billot," said Pitou, interrupting him, "but *deficit* is a Latin word, which means to say a want of something. What is it that is wanting?"

"Zounds! why, money, to be sure; and it is because money is wanting, it is because the queen's favorites have devoured this money which is wanting, that the queen is

called Madame Deficit. It is not therefore the king who is angry, but the queen. The king is only vexed, — vexed that everything goes so badly."

"I comprehend," said Pitou; but the casket?"

"That is true, that is true, Pitou; these devilish politics always drag me on farther than I would go — yes, the casket, before everything. You are right, Pitou; when I shall have seen Doctor Gilbert, why, then, we can return to politics — it is a sacred duty."

"There is nothing more sacred than sacred duties," said Pitou.

"Well, then, let us go to the College Louis-le-Grand, where Sebastien Gilbert now is," said Billot.

"Let us go," said Pitou, sighing; for he would be compelled to leave a bed of moss-like grass, to which he had accustomed himself. Besides which, notwithstanding the over-excitement of the evening, sleep, the assiduous host of pure consciences and tired limbs, had descended with all its poppies to welcome the virtuous and heartily tired Pitou.

Billot was already on his feet, and Pitou was about to rise, when the half-hour struck.

"But," said Billot, "at half-past eleven o'clock the college of Louis-le-Grand must, it would appear to me, be closed."

"Oh, most assuredly," said Pitou.

"And then, in the dark," continued Billot, "we might fall into some ambuscade; it seems to me that I see the fires of a bivouac in the direction of the Palace of Justice. I may be arrested, or I may be killed; you are right, Pitou, I must not be arrested, — I must not be killed."

It was the third time since morning that Pitou's ears had been saluted with those words so flattering to human

"You are right."

Pitou thought he could not do better than to repeat the words of Billot.

"You are right," he repeated, lying down again upon the grass; "you must not allow yourself to be killed, dear Monsieur Billot."

And the conclusion of this phrase died away in Pitou's throat. *Vox faucibus hæsit*, he might have added, had he been awake; but he was fast asleep.

Billot did not perceive it.

"An idea," said he.

"Ah!" snored Pitou.

"Listen to me; I have an idea. Notwithstanding all the precautions I am taking, I may be killed. I may be cut down by a sabre or killed from a distance by a ball, — killed suddenly upon the spot; if that should happen, you ought to know what you will have to say to Doctor Gilbert in my stead: but you must be mute, Pitou."

Pitou heard not a word of this, and consequently made no reply.

"Should I be wounded mortally, and not be able to fulfil my mission, you will, in my place, seek out Doctor Gilbert, and you will say to him — do you understand me, Pitou?" added the farmer, stooping towards his companion, "and you will say to him — why, confound him, he is positively snoring, the sad fellow!"

All the excitement of Billot was at once damped on ascertaining that Pitou was asleep.

"Well, let us sleep, then," said he; and he laid himself down by Pitou's side, without grumbling very seriously. For, however accustomed to fatigue, the ride of the previous day and the events of the evening did not fail to have a soporific effect on the good farmer.

And the day broke about three hours after they had

gone to sleep, or rather, we should say, after their senses were benumbed.

When they again opened their eyes, Paris had lost nothing of that savage countenance which they had observed the night before. Only there were no soldiers to be seen; the people were everywhere.

The people armed themselves with pikes hastily manufactured, with muskets which the majority of them knew not how to handle, with magnificent weapons made centuries before, and of which the bearers admired the ornaments, some being inlaid with gold or ivory or mother-of-pearl, without comprehending the use or the mechanism of them.

Immediately after the retreat of the soldiers the populace had pillaged the palace called the Garde-Meuble.

And the people dragged towards the Hôtel de Ville two small pieces of artillery.

The alarm-bell was rung from the towers of Notre Dame, at the Hôtel de Ville, and in all the parish churches. There were seen issuing, — from where no one could tell, — but as from beneath the pavement, legions of men and women, squalid, emaciated, in filthy rags, half naked, who but the evening before cried, "Give us bread!" but now vociferated, "Give us arms!"

Nothing could be more terrifying than these bands of spectres, who, during the last three months had poured into the capital from the country, passing through the city gates silently, and installing themselves in Paris, where famine reigned, like Arabian ghouls in a cemetery.

On that day the whole of France, represented in Paris by the starving people from each province, cried to its king, "Give us liberty!" and to its God, "Give us food!"

Billot, who was first to awake, roused up Pitou, and they both set off to the College Louis-le-Grand, looking around them, shuddering and terrified at the miserable creatures they saw on every side.

By degrees, as they advanced towards that part of the town which we now call the Latin Quarter, as they ascended the Rue de la Harpe, as they approached their destination, the Rue Saint Jacques, they saw, as during the times of La Fronde, barricades being raised in every street. Women and children were carrying to the tops of the houses ponderous folio volumes, heavy pieces of furniture, and precious marble ornaments, destined to crush the foreign soldiers in case of their venturing into the narrow and tortuous streets of old Paris.

From time to time Billot observed one or two of the French Guards forming the centre of some meeting which they were organizing, and which, with marvellous rapidity, they were teaching the handling of a musket, — exercises which women and children were curiously observing, and almost with a desire of learning them themselves.

Billot and Pitou found the College of Louis-le-Grand in flagrant insurrection; the pupils had risen against their teachers, and had driven them from the building. At the moment when the farmer and his companion reached the grated gate, the scholars were attacking this gate, uttering loud threats, to which the affrighted principal replied with tears.

The farmer for a moment gazed on this intestine revolt, when suddenly, in a stentorian voice, he cried out: —

"Which of you here is called Sebastien Gilbert?"

"'T is I," replied a young lad, about fifteen years of age, of almost feminine beauty, and who, with the assist-

ance of four or five of his comrades, was carrying a ladder wherewith to escalade the walls, seeing that they could not force open the gate.

"Come nearer to me, my child."

"What is it that you want with me?" said young Sebastien to Billot.

"Do you wish to take him away?" cried the principal, terrified at the aspect of two armed men, one of whom — the one who had spoken to young Gilbert — was covered with blood.

The boy, on his side, looked with astonishment at these two men, and was endeavoring, but uselessly, to recognize his foster-brother, Pitou, who had grown so immeasurably tall since he last saw him, and who was altogether metamorphosed by the warlike accoutrements he had put on.

"Take him away!" exclaimed Billot, "take away Monsieur Gilbert's son, and lead him into all this turmoil, — expose him to receiving some unhappy blow! Oh! no, indeed!"

"Do you see, Sebastien," said the principal, "do you see, you furious fellow, that even your friends will have nothing to do with you? For, in short, these gentlemen appear to be your friends. Come, gentlemen, come, my young pupils, come, my children," cried the poor principal, "obey me — obey me, I command you — obey me, I entreat you."

"*Oro obtestorque*," said Pitou.

"Sir," said young Gilbert, with a firmness that was extraordinary in a youth of his age, "retain my comrades, if such be your pleasure; but as to me, do you understand me, I will go out."

He made a movement towards the gate; the professor caught him by the arm.

But he, shaking his fine auburn curls upon his pallid forehead, —

"Sir," said he, "beware what you are doing. I am not in the same position as your other pupils. My father has been arrested, imprisoned; my father is in the power of the tyrants."

"In the power of the tyrants!" exclaimed Billot; "speak, my child; what is it that you mean?"

"Yes, yes," cried several of the scholars, "Sebastien is right; his father has been arrested; and since the people have opened the prisons, he wishes they should open his father's prison too."

"Oh, oh!" said the farmer, shaking the bars of the gate with his herculean arms, "they have arrested Doctor Gilbert, have they? By Heaven! my little Catherine, then, was right!"

"Yes, sir," continued young Gilbert, "they have arrested my father, and that is why I wish to get out, why I wish to take a musket, why I wish to fight until I have liberated my dear father."

And these words were accompanied and encouraged by a hundred furious voices, crying in every key: —

"Arms! arms! let us have arms!"

On hearing these cries, the crowd which had collected in the street, animated in its turn by an heroic ardor, rushed towards the gate to give liberty to the collegians.

The principal threw himself upon his knees between his scholars and the invaders, and held out his arms with a supplicating gesture.

"Oh, my friends! my friends!" cried he, "respect my children!"

"Do we not respect them?" said a French Guard. "I believe we do, indeed. They are fine boys, and they will do their exercise admirably."

"My friends! my friends! These children are a sacred deposit which their parents have confided to me; I am responsible for them; their parents calculate upon me: for them I would sacrifice my life; but, in the name of Heaven! do not take away these children!"

Hootings, proceeding from the street, that is to say, from the hindmost ranks of the crowd, replied to these piteous supplications.

Billot rushed forward, opposing the French Guards, the crowd, the scholars themselves:—

"He is right, it is a sacred trust; let men fight, let men get themselves killed, but let children live; they are seed for the future."

A disapproving murmur followed these words.

"Who is it that murmurs?" cried Billot; "assuredly, it cannot be a father. I who am now speaking to you, had two men killed in my arms; their blood is upon my shirt. See this!"

And he showed his shirt and waistcoat all begrimed with blood, and with a dignified movement which electrified the crowd.

"Yesterday," continued Billot, "I fought at the Palais Royal; and at the Tuileries, and this lad also fought there, but this lad has neither father nor mother; moreover, he is almost a man."

And he pointed to Pitou, who looked proudly around him.

"To-day," continued Billot, "I shall fight again; but let no one say to me, 'The Parisians were not strong enough to contend against the foreign soldiers, and they called children to their aid.'"

"Yes, yes," resounded on every side, proceeding from women in the crowd, and several of the soldiers; "he is right, children: go into the college; go into the college."

"Oh, thanks, thanks, sir!" murmured the principal of the college, endeavoring to catch hold of Billot's hand through the bars of the gate.

"And, above all, take special care of Sebastien; keep him safe," said the latter.

"Keep me! I say, on the contrary, that I will not be kept here," cried the boy, livid with anger, and struggling with the college servants, who were dragging him away.

"Let me in," said Billot. "I will engage to quiet him."

The crowd made way for him to pass; the farmer dragged Pitou after him, and entered the courtyard of the college.

Already three or four of the French Guards, and about ten men, placed themselves as sentinels at the gate, and prevented the egress of the young insurgents.

Billot went straight up to young Sebastien, and taking between his huge and horny palms the small white hands of the child —

"Sebastien," he said, "do you not recognize me?"

"No."

"I am old Billot, your father's farmer."

"I know you now, sir."

"And this lad," rejoined Billot, pointing to his companion, "do you know him?"

"Ange Pitou," said the boy.

"Yes, Sebastien; it is I — it is I."

And Pitou, weeping with joy, threw his arms round the neck of his foster-brother and former schoolfellow.

"Well," said the boy, whose brow still remained scowling, "what is now to be done?"

"What?" cried Billot. "Why, if they have taken your father from you, I will restore him to you. Do you understand?"

"You?"

"Yes, I — I, and all those who are out yonder with me. What the devil! Yesterday, we had to deal with the Austrians, and we saw their cartridge-boxes."

"In proof of which, I have one of them," said Pitou.

"Shall we not release his father?" cried Billot, addressing the crowd.

"Yes! yes!" roared the crowd. "We will release him."

Sebastien shook his head.

"My father is in the Bastille," said he in a despairing tone.

"And what then?" cried Billot.

"The Bastille cannot be taken," replied the child.

"Then what was it you wished to do, if such is your conviction?"

"I wished to go to the open space before the castle. There will be fighting there, and my father might have seen me through the bars of his window."

"Impossible!"

"Impossible? And why should I not do so? One day, when I was walking out with all the boys here, I saw the head of a prisoner. If I could have seen my father as I saw that prisoner, I should have recognized him, and I would have called out to him, 'Do not be unhappy, Father, I love you!'"

"And if the soldiers of the Bastille should have killed you?"

"Well, then, they would have killed me under the eyes of my father."

"The death of all the devils!" exclaimed Billot. "You are a wicked lad to think of getting yourself killed in your father's sight, and make him die of grief, in a cage, — he who has only you in the world, he who loves

you so tenderly! Decidedly, you have a bad heart, Gilbert."

And the farmer pushed the boy from him.

"Yes, yes; a wicked heart!" howled Pitou, bursting into tears.

Sebastien did not reply.

And, while he was meditating in gloomy silence, Billot was admiring his beautifully pale face, his flashing eyes, his ironical expressive mouth, his well-shaped nose, and his strongly developed chin, all of which gave testimony at once of his nobility of soul and nobility of race.

"You say that your father is in the Bastille," said the farmer, at length breaking the silence.

"Yes."

"And for what?"

"Because my father is the friend of Lafayette and Washington; because my father has fought with his sword for the independence of America, and with his pen for the liberty of France; because my father is well known in both worlds as the detester of tyranny; because he has called down curses on the Bastille, in which so many have suffered; therefore have they sent him there!"

"And when was this?"

"Six days ago."

"And where did they arrest him?"

"At Havre, where he had just landed."

"How do you know all this?"

"I have received a letter from him."

"Dated from Havre?"

"Yes."

"And it was at Havre itself that he was arrested?"

"It was at Lillebonne."

"Come now, child, do not feel angry with me, but

give me all the particulars that you know. I swear to you that I will either leave my bones on the Place de la Bastille, or you shall see your father again."

Sebastien looked at the farmer, and seeing that he spoke from his heart, his angry feelings subsided.

"Well, then," said he, "at Lillebonne he had time to write in a book, with a pencil, these words: —

SEBASTIEN, — I have been arrested, and they are taking me to the Bastille. Be patient, hope, and study diligently.

LILLEBONNE, July 7, 1789.

P. S. — I am arrested in the cause of Liberty. I have a son in the College Louis-le-Grand, at Paris. The person who shall find this book is entreated, in the name of humanity, to get it conveyed to my son. His name is Sebastien Gilbert.

"And this book?" inquired Billot, palpitating with emotion.

"He put a piece of gold into this book, tied a cord round it, and threw it out of the window."

"And —"

"The curate of the place found it, and chose from among his parishioners a robust young man, to whom he said: —

"'Leave twelve francs with your family, who are without bread, and with the other twelve go to Paris; carry this book to a poor boy whose father has just been arrested because he has too great a love for the people.'

"The young man arrived here at noon yesterday, and delivered to me my father's book. And this is the way I learned how my father had been arrested."

"Come, come," cried Billot, "this reconciles me somewhat to the priests. Unfortunately they are not all like this one. And this worthy young man, — what has become of him?"

"He set off to return home last night. He hoped to carry back with him to his family five francs out of the twelve he had brought with him."

"Admirable! admirable!" exclaimed Pitou, weeping for joy. "Oh, the people have good feelings! Go on, Gilbert."

"Why, now you know all."

"Yes."

"You promised me, if I would tell you all, that you would bring back my father to me. I have told you all; now remember your promise."

"I told you that I would save him, or I should be killed in the attempt. That is true. And now, show me the book," said Billot.

"Here it is," said the boy, taking from his pocket a volume of the "Contrat Social."

"And where is your father's writing?"

"Here," replied the boy, pointing to what the doctor had written.

The farmer kissed the written characters.

"And now," said he, "tranquillize yourself. I am going to seek your father in the Bastille."

"Unhappy man!" cried the principal of the college, seizing Billot's hands; "how can you obtain access to a prisoner of State?"

"Zounds! by taking the Bastille!"

Some of the French Guards began to laugh. In a few moments the laugh had become general.

"Why," said Billot, casting around him a glance flashing with anger, "what then is in the Bastille, if you please?"

"Stone," said a soldier.

"Iron," said another.

"And fire," said a third. "Take care, my worthy man: you may burn your fingers."

"Yes, yes; you may burn yourself," reiterated the crowd, with horror.

"Ah! Parisians," shouted the farmer, "you have pickaxes, and you are afraid of stone! Ah! you have lead, and you fear iron! You have gunpowder, and you are afraid of fire! Parisians!—cowards! Parisians!—poltroons! Parisians!—machines for slavery! A thousand demons!—where is the man of heart who will go with me and Pitou to take the king's Bastille? My name is Billot, a farmer of the Isle de France. Forward!"

Billot had raised himself to the very climax of audacity.

The crowd, rendered enthusiastic by his address, and trembling with excitement, pressed around him, crying, "To the Bastille!"

Sebastien endeavored to cling to Billot, but the latter gently pushed him back.

"Child," said he, "what is the last word your father wrote to you?"

"Work," replied Sebastien.

"Well, then, *work* here. We are going to *work* down yonder; only our work is called destroying and killing."

The young man did not utter a word in reply. He hid his face with both hands, without even pressing the hand of Pitou, who embraced him; and he fell into such violent convulsions that he was immediately carried into the infirmary attached to the college.

"To the Bastille!" cried Billot.

"To the Bastille!" cried Pitou.

"To the Bastille!" shouted the crowd.

And they immediately commenced their march towards the Bastille.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE KING IS SO GOOD! THE QUEEN IS SO GOOD!

And now we request our readers to allow us to give them an insight into the principal political events that have occurred since the period at which, in a previous publication, we abandoned the court of France.

Those who know the history of that period, or those whom dry, plain history may alarm, may skip this chapter, and pass on to the next one, which connects exactly with Chapter XII.; the one we are now writing being intended for those very precise and exacting spirits who are determined to be informed on every point.

During the last year or two something unheard of, unknown, something emanating from the past and looking towards the future, was threatening and growling in the air.

It was the Revolution.

Voltaire had raised himself for a moment, while in his last agony, and, leaning upon his elbow in his death-bed, he had seen shining, even amidst the darkness in which he was about to sleep forever, the brilliant lightnings of this dawn.

When Anne of Austria assumed the regency of France, says Cardinal de Retz, there was but one saying in every mouth, — "The queen is so good!"

One day Madame de Pompadour's physician, Quesnoy, who had an apartment in her house, saw Louis XV. com-

ing in. A feeling altogether unconnected with respect agitated him so much that he trembled and turned pale.

"What is the matter with you?" said Madame de Hausset to him.

"The matter is," replied Quesnoy, "that every time I see the king I say to myself, 'There is a man who, if he should feel so inclined, can have my head cut off.'"

"Oh, there 's no danger of that," rejoined Madame de Hausset. "The king is so good!"

It is with these two phrases — "The king is so good!" "The queen is so good!" — that the French Revolution was effected.

When Louis XV. died, France breathed again. The country was delivered at the same moment from the king, the Pompadours, the Dubarrys, and the *Parc aux Cerfs*.

The pleasures of Louis XV. had cost the nation very dear. In them alone were expended three millions of livres a year.

Fortunately, after him came a king who was young, moral, philanthropic, almost philosophical.

A king who, like the Émile of Jean Jacques Rousseau, had studied a trade, or rather, we should say, three trades.

He was a locksmith, a watchmaker, and a mechanician.

Being alarmed at the abyss over which he was suspended, the king began by refusing all favors that were asked of him. The courtiers trembled. Fortunately, there was one circumstance which reassured them, — it was not the king who refused, but Turgot, — it was, that the queen was not yet in reality a queen, and consequently could not have that influence to-day which she might acquire to-morrow.

At last, towards the year 1777, she acquired that in-

fluence which had been so long desired. The queen became a mother. The king, who was already so good a king, so good a husband, could now also prove himself a good father.

How could anything be now refused to her who had given an heir to the crown?

And, besides, that was not all; the king was also a good brother. The anecdote is well known of Beaumarchais being sacrificed to the Count de Provence; and yet the king did not like the Count de Provence, who was a pedant.

But, to make up for this, he was very fond of his younger brother, the Count d'Artois, the type of French wit, elegance, and nobleness.

He loved him so much that if he sometimes refused the queen any favor she might have asked of him, the Count d'Artois had only to add his solicitations to those of the queen, and the king had no longer the firmness to refuse.

It was, in fact, the reign of amiable men. Monsieur de Calonne, one of the most amiable men in the world, was comptroller-general. It was Calonne who said to the queen, —

"Madame, if it is possible, it is done; and if it is impossible, it shall be done."

From the very day on which this charming reply was circulated in all the drawing-rooms of Paris and Versailles, the Red Book, which every one had thought closed forever, was reopened.

The queen buys Saint Cloud.

The king buys Rambouillet.

It is no longer the king who has lady favorites, it is the queen. Mesdames Diana and Jules de Polignac cost as much to France as La Pompadour and La Dubarry.

The queen is so good!

A reduction is proposed in the salaries of the high officers of the court. Some of them make up their minds to it. But one of the most habitual frequenters of the palace obstinately refuses to submit to this reduction; it is Monsieur de Coigny. He meets the king in one of the corridors, a terrible scene occurs, the king runs away, and in the evening says laughingly, —

"Upon my word, I believe if I had not yielded, Coigny would have beaten me."

The king is so good!

And then the fate of a kingdom sometimes depends upon a very trivial circumstance; the spur of a page, for instance.

Louis XV. dies; who is to succeed Monsieur d'Aiguillon?

The king, Louis XVI., is for Machaut. Machaut is one of the ministers who had sustained the already tottering throne. Mesdames, that is to say, the king's aunts, are for Monsieur de Maurepas, who is so amusing, and who writes such pretty songs. He wrote three volumes of them at Pontchartrain, which he called his memoirs.

All this is a steeple-chase affair. The question was as to who should arrive first, — the king and queen at Arnouville, or mesdames at Pontchartrain.

The king has the power in his own hands; the chances are therefore in his favor.

He hastens to write: —

Set out, the very moment you receive this, for Paris; I am waiting for you.

He slips his despatch into an envelope, and on the envelope he writes, —

"Monsieur le Comte de Machaut, at Arnouville."

A page of the king's stables is sent for; the royal missive is put into his hands, and he is ordered to mount a horse, and to go to Arnouville full speed.

And now that the page is despatched, the king can receive mesdames.

Mesdames, — the same whom the king their father, as has been seen in "Balsamo," called Loque, Chiffe, and Graille, three names eminently aristocratic, — mesdames are waiting at a door opposite to that by which the page goes out, until he shall have left the room.

The page once gone out, mesdames may go in.

They go in, entreat the king in favor of Monsieur Maurepas; all this is a mere question of time; the king does not like to refuse mesdames anything, — *the king is so good!*

He will accede to their request when the page shall have got so far on his journey that no one can come up with him.

He contested the point with mesdames, his eyes fixed on the time-piece. Half an hour will be sufficient for him. The time-piece will not deceive him. It is the time-piece which he himself regulates.

Twenty minutes have elapsed, and he yields.

"Let the page be overtaken," said he, "and all shall be as you please."

Mesdames rush out of the room; they will despatch a man on horseback; he shall kill a horse, two horses, ten horses, but the page must be overtaken.

All these determinations are unnecessary; not a single horse will be killed.

In going down the staircase one of the page's spurs struck against one of the stone steps and broke short off. How could any one go at full speed with only one spur?

Besides, the Chevalier d'Abzac is the chief of the great

stable, and he would not allow a courier to mount his horse — he whose duty it was to inspect the couriers — if the courier was about to set out in a manner that would not do honor to the royal stables.

The page therefore could not set out without having both his spurs.

The result of all this was, that instead of overtaking the page on the road to Arnouville — galloping at full speed — he was overtaken before he had left the court-yard of the palace.

He was already in the saddle and was about to depart in the most irreproachable good order.

The despatch is taken from him, the text of the missive is left unchanged, for it was as good for the one as the other. Only instead of writing the address, "To Monsieur de Machaut, at Arnouville," mesdames wrote, "To Monsieur le Comte de Maurepas, at Pontchartrain."

The honor of the royal stable is saved, but the monarchy is lost.

With Maurepas and Calonne everything goes on marvellously: the one sings, the other pays; but besides the courtiers, there are the receivers-general, who also have their functions to perform.

Louis XIV. began his reign by ordering two receivers-general to be hanged, with the advice of Colbert; after which he took Lavallière for his mistress and built Versailles. Lavallière cost him nothing.

But Versailles, in which he wished to lodge her, cost him a round sum.

Then, in 1685, under the pretext that they were Protestants, he drove a million of industrious men from France.

And thus, in 1707, still under the *great* king, Boisguilbert said, speaking of 1698: —

"Things still went on well in those days, there was yet some oil in the lamp. But now all has come to an end, for want of aliment."

What could be said eighty years afterwards, when the Dubarrys, the Polignacs, had taken their fill? After having made the people sweat water, they would make them sweat blood. That was all.

And all this in so delightful and polite a manner.

In former days the contractors of the public revenue were harsh, brutal, and cold, as the prison gates into which they cast their victims.

But in these days they are philanthropists: with one hand they despoil the people, it is true; but with the other they build hospitals for them.

One of my friends, a great financier, has assured me that out of one hundred and twenty millions, which the town dues bring in, the contractors managed to keep seventy millions for themselves.

It happened that at a meeting where the state of expenses was demanded, a counsellor, playing upon the word, said: —

"It is not any particular state that we require; what we want are the States-General."

The spark fell upon gunpowder, the powder ignited and caused a general conflagration.

Every one repeated the saying of the counsellor, and the States-General were loudly called for.

The court fixed the opening of the States-General for the 1st of March, 1789.

On the 24th of August, 1788, Monsieur de Brienne withdrew from public affairs. He was another who had managed the financial affairs with tolerable recklessness.

But on withdrawing, he at least gave good counsel; he advised that Necker should be recalled.

Necker resumed the administration of affairs, and all again breathed confidently.

Notwithstanding this, the great question of the three orders was discussed throughout France.

Sieyès published his famous pamphlets upon the Tiers État.[1]

Dauphiny, the States of which province still met in spite of all the court could do, decided that the representation of the Tiers État should be on an equality with that of the nobility and clergy.

The assembly of the notables was reconstructed.

This assembly lasted thirty-two days, that is to say, from the 6th of November to the 8th of December, 1788.

On this occasion the elements performed their part. When the whip of kings does not suffice, the whip of Providence whistles in the air and compels the people to move onward.

Winter came, accompanied by famine. Hunger and cold opened the gates of 1789.

Paris was filled with troops, its streets with patrols.

Two or three times the muskets of the soldiers were loaded in the presence of the people, who were dying of hunger.

And then the muskets being loaded, and the moment having arrived for using them, they did not use them at all.

One morning, the 28th of April, five days before the opening of the States-General, a name was circulated among the crowd.

This name was accompanied by maledictions, and the more vituperative because this name was that of a workman who had become rich.

[1] The Third Order, or Third Estate.

Réveillon, as was then asserted, — Réveillon, the director of the celebrated paper manufactory of the Faubourg Saint Antoine, — Réveillon had said that the wages of workmen ought to be reduced to fifteen sous a day.

And this was true.

It was also said that the court was about to decorate him with the black ribbon, — that is to say, with the Order of Saint Michael.

But this was an absurdity.

There is always some absurd rumor in popular commotions; and it is remarkable that it is also by this rumor that they increase their numbers, that they recruit, and at last become a revolution.

The crowd makes an effigy, baptizes it with the name of Réveillon, decorates it with the black ribbon, sets fire to it before Réveillon's own door, and then proceeds to the square before the Hôtel de Ville, where it completes the burning of the effigy before the eyes of the municipal authorities, who see it burning.

Impunity emboldens the crowd, who give notice that, after having done justice on the effigy, they will the following day do justice on the real person of the offender.

This was a challenge in due form addressed to the public authorities.

The authorities sent thirty of the French Guards, and even then it was not the authorities who sent them, but their colonel, Monsieur de Biron.

These thirty French Guards were merely witnesses of this great duel, which they could not prevent. They looked on while the mob was pillaging the manufactory, throwing the furniture out of the windows, breaking everything, burning everything. Amid all this hubbub, five hundred louis in gold were stolen.

They drank the wine in the cellars, and when there was no more wine, they drank the dyes of the manufactory, which they took for wine.

The whole of the day of the 27th was employed in effecting this villanous spoliation.

A reinforcement was sent to the thirty men. It consisted of several companies of the French Guards, who in the first place fired blank cartridges, then balls. Towards evening there came to the support of the Guards part of the Swiss regiment of Monsieur de Besenval.

The Swiss never make a jest of matters connected with revolution.

The Swiss forgot to take the balls out of their cartridges, and as the Swiss are naturally sportsmen, and good marksmen too, about twenty of the pillagers remained upon the pavement.

Some of them had about them a portion of the five hundred louis which we have mentioned, and which from the secretary of Réveillon had passed into the pockets of the pillagers, and from the pockets of the pillagers into those of the Swiss Guards.

Besenval had done all this; he had done it "out of his own head," as the vulgar saying has it.

The king did not thank him for what he had done, nor did he blame him for it.

Now, when the king does not thank, the king blames.

The parliament opened an inquiry.

The king closed it.

The king was so good!

Who it was that had stirred on the people to do this no one could tell.

Has it not been often seen, during the great heats of summer, that conflagrations have taken place without any apparent cause?

The Duke of Orleans was accused of having excited this disturbance.

The accusation was absurd, and it fell to the ground.

On the 29th Paris was perfectly tranquil, or at least appeared to be so.

The 4th of May arrived. The king and the queen went in procession with the whole Court to the Cathedral of Notre Dame to hear "Veni, Creator."

There were great shouts of "Long live the king!" and above all of, "Long live the queen!"

The queen was so good!

This was the last day of peace.

The next day the shouts of "Long live the queen!" were not so frequent, but the mob cried more frequently, "Long live the Duke of Orleans!"

These cries wounded her feelings much, poor woman! — she who detested the duke to such a degree that she said he was a coward.

As if there had ever been a coward in the Orleans family, — from Monsieur, who gained the battle of Cassel, down to the Duke of Chartres, who contributed to the gaining of those at Jemmapes and Valmy!

It went so far that the poor woman was near fainting, but was supported, her head drooping on her shoulder. Madame Campan relates this incident in her memoirs.

But this reclining head raised itself up haughty and disdainful. Those who saw the expression of those features were at once cured, and forever, of using the expression: —

The queen is so good!

There exist three portraits of the queen: one painted in 1776, another in 1784, and a third in 1788.

I have seen all three of them. See them in your turn! If ever these three portraits are placed in the same gal-

lery, the history of Marie Antoinette can be read in those three portraits.[1]

The meeting of the three orders, which was to have produced a general pacification, proved a declaration of war.

"Three orders," said Sieyès; "no, three nations."

On the 3d of May, the eve of the Mass of the Holy Ghost, the king received the deputies at Versailles.

Some persons counselled him to substitute cordiality for etiquette.

The king would not listen to anything.

He in the first place received the clergy.

After them the nobility.

At last the Tiers État.

The Third had been waiting a long time.

The Third murmured.

In the assemblies of former times the Tiers État pronounced their discourses on their knees.

There was no possibility of inducing the president of the Tiers État to go down on his knees.

It was decided that the Tiers État should not pronounce an oration.

In the sittings of the 5th the king put on his hat.

The nobility put on their hats.

The Tiers État were about to put on their hats also, but the king then took off his. He preferred holding it in his hand to seeing the Tiers État covered in his presence.

On Wednesday, the 10th of June, Sieyès entered the assembly. He found it almost entirely composed of the Tiers État.

The clergy and the nobility were assembled elsewhere.

"Let us cut the cable," said Sieyès. "It is now time."

[1] The three portraits are at Versailles.

And Sieyès proposed that the clergy and the nobility should be summoned to attend within an hour from that time at the latest.

In case of non-appearance, default should be pronounced against the absent.

A German and Swiss army surrounded Versailles. A battery of artillery was pointed against the assembly.

Sieyès saw nothing of all this; he saw the people, who were starving; but the Third, Sieyès was told, could not, of itself, form the States-General.

"So much the better," replied Sieyès, "it will form the National Assembly."

The absent did not present themselves; the proposal of Sieyès was adopted; the Tiers État calls itself the National Assembly by a majority of four hundred votes.

On the 19th of June the king orders the building in which the National Assembly held their meetings to be closed.

But the king, in order to accomplish such a *coup d'état*, needed some pretext.

The hall was closed for the purpose of making preparations for a royal sitting, which was to take place on the following Monday.

On the 20th of June, at seven in the morning, the President of the National Assembly is informed that there will be no meeting on that day.

At eight o'clock he presents himself at the door of the hall, with a great number of the deputies.

The doors are closed, and sentinels are guarding the doors.

The rain is falling.

They wish to break open the doors.

The sentinels had received their orders, and they present their bayonets.

One of the deputies proposes that they should meet at the Place d'Armes.

Another that it should be at Marly.

Guillotin proposes the Jeu de Paume.[1]

Guillotin!

What a strange thing that it should be Guillotin, whose name, by adding an *e* to it, should become so celebrated four years afterwards, — how strange that it should be Guillotin who proposed the Jeu de Paume, — the Jeu de Paume, unfurnished, dilapidated, open to the four winds of heaven!

To this great demonstration the king replies by the royal word, "Veto!"

Monsieur de Brézé is sent to the rebels to order them to disperse.

"We are here by the will of the people," said Mirabeau, "and we will not leave this place but with bayonets pointed at our breasts."

And not, as it has been asserted, that he said "*by the force of bayonets.*" Why is it that there is always behind great men some paltry rhetorician who spoils his sayings under pretext of arranging them?

Why was there such a rhetorician behind Mirabeau at the Jeu de Paume?

And behind Cambronne at Waterloo?

The reply was at once reported to the king.

He walked about for some time with the air of a man who was suffering from *ennui*.

"They will not go away?" said he.

"No, Sire."

"Well, then, leave them where they are."

As is here shown, royalty was already bending beneath the hand of the people, and bending very low.

[1] The tennis-court.

From the 21st of June to the 12th of July all appeared tolerably calm; but it was that heavy and stifling calm which precedes the tempest.

It was like the uneasy dream of an uneasy slumber.

On the 11th the king formed a resolution, urged to it by the queen, the Count d'Artois, the Polignacs, — in fact, the whole of the *Camarilla* of Versailles; in short, he dismissed Necker.

On the 12th this intelligence reached Paris.

The effect which it produced has already been seen. On the evening of the 13th, Billot arrived just in time to see the barriers burning.

On the 13th, in the evening, Paris was defending itself.

On the 14th, in the morning, Paris was ready to attack.

On the morning of the 14th Billot cried, "To the Bastille!" and three thousand men, imitating Billot, reiterated the same cry, which was about to become that of the whole population of Paris.

The reason was, that there had existed during five centuries a monument weighing heavily upon the breast of France, like the infernal rock upon the shoulders of Sisyphus.

Only that, less confiding than the Titan in his strength, France had never attempted to throw it off.

This monument, the seal of feudality, imprinted on the forehead of Paris, was the Bastille.

The king was too good, as Madame de Hausset had said, to have a head cut off.

But the king sent people to the Bastille.

When once a man became acquainted with the Bastille, by order of the king, that man was forgotten, sequestrated, interred, annihilated.

He remained there until the king remembered him; and kings have so many new things occurring around them every day, of which they are obliged to think, that they often forget to think of old matters.

Moreover, in France there was not only one Bastille, there were twenty other Bastilles, which were called Fort l'Evêque, Saint-Lazare, the Châtelet, the Conciergerie, Vincennes, the Castle of La Roche, the Castle of If, the Isles of St. Marguerite, Pignerolles, etc.

Only the fortress at the gate St. Antoine was called *the Bastille*, as *Rome* was called *the* city.

It was the Bastille, *par excellence*. It was of more importance than all the others.

During nearly a whole century the governorship of the Bastille had continued in one and the same family.

The grandfather of this elect race was Monsieur de Châteauneuf. His son, Lavrillière, succeeded him, who, in turn, was succeeded by his grandson, Saint Florentin. The dynasty became extinct in 1777.

During this triple reign, the greater part of which passed during the reign of Louis XV., it would be impossible to state the number of *lettres de cachet*.[1] Saint Florentin alone received more than fifty thousand.

The *lettres de cachet* were a great source of revenue.

They were sold to fathers who wished to get rid of their sons.

They were sold to women who wished to get rid of their husbands.

The prettier the wives were, the less did the *lettre de cachet* cost them.

It then became, between them and the minister, an exchange of polite attentions, and that was all.

Since the end of the reign of Louis XIV., all the state

[1] Secret orders of imprisonment.

prisons, and particularly the Bastille, were in the hands of the Jesuits.

Among the prisoners, it will be recollected, the following were of the greatest note : —

The Iron Mask, Lauzun, Latude.

The Jesuits were father confessors ; for greater security they confessed the prisoners.

For greater security still, the prisoners were buried under supposititious names.

The Iron Mask, it will be remembered, was buried under the name of Marchialy. He had remained forty-five years in prison.

Lauzun remained there fourteen years.

Latude, thirty years.

But, at all events, the Iron Mask and Lauzun had committed heinous crimes.

The Iron Mask, whether brother or not of Louis XIV., it is asserted, resembled King Louis XIV. so strongly that it was almost impossible to distinguish the one from the other.

It is exceedingly imprudent to dare to resemble a king.

Lauzun had been very near marrying, or did actually marry, the Grande Mademoiselle.

It is exceedingly imprudent to dare to marry the niece of King Louis XIII., the granddaughter of Henry IV.

But Latude, poor devil, what had he done?

He had dared to fall in love with Mademoiselle Poisson, Dame de Pompadour, the king's mistress.

He had written a note to her.

This note, which a respectable woman would have sent back to the man who wrote it, was handed by Madame de Pompadour to Monsieur de Sartines, the lieutenant-general of police.

And Latude, arrested, fugitive, taken and retaken, remained thirty years locked up in the Bastille, the Castle of Vincennes, and Bicêtre.

It was not, therefore, without reason that the Bastille was abhorred.

The people hated it as if it were a living thing. They had formed of it a gigantic chimera, one of those monsters like those of Gévauden, who pitilessly devour the human species.

The grief of poor Sebastien Gilbert will therefore be fully comprehended, when he was informed that his father was in the Bastille.

Billot's conviction will also be understood, that the doctor would never be released from his prison unless he was released by force.

The frenetic impulse of the people will be also understood, when Billot vociferated, "To the Bastille!"

Only that it was a senseless idea, as the soldiers had remarked, that the Bastille could be taken.

The Bastille had provisions, a garrison, artillery.

The Bastille had walls, which were fifteen feet thick at their summit and forty at their base.

The Bastille had a governor, whose name was De Launay, who had stored thirty thousand pounds of gunpowder in his cellars, and who had sworn, in case of being surprised by a *coup de main*, to blow up the Bastille, and with it half the Faubourg St. Antoine.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE THREE POWERS OF FRANCE.

BILLOT still walked on, but it was no longer he who shouted. The crowd, delighted with his martial air, recognized in this man one of their own class. Commenting on his words and action, they followed him, still increasing like the waves of the incoming tide.

Behind Billot, when he issued from the narrow streets and came upon the Quay St. Michel, marched more than three thousand men, armed with cutlasses or pikes or guns.

They all cried, "To the Bastille! to the Bastille!"

Billot counselled with his own thoughts. The reflections which we made at the close of the last chapter presented themselves to his mind, and by degrees all the fumes of his feverish excitement evaporated.

Then he saw clearly into his own mind.

The enterprise was sublime, but insensate. This was easily to be understood from the affrighted and ironical countenances on which were reflected the impressions produced by the cry of "To the Bastille!" But nevertheless he was only the more strengthened in his resolution.

He could not, however, but comprehend that he was responsible to mothers, wives, and children for the lives of the men who were following him, and he felt bound to use every possible precaution.

Billot, therefore, began by leading his little army on to the square in front of the Hôtel de Ville.[1]

[1] Town House, or City Hall.

There he appointed his lieutenant and other officers — watch-dogs — to restrain the flock.

"Let us see," thought Billot, "there is a power in France, — there are even two, — there are even three. Let us consult."

He entered the Hôtel de Ville, asking who was the chief of the municipality.

He was told it was the Provost of the Merchants, the mayor of Paris, Monsieur de Flesselles.

"Ah, ah!" cried he, with a dissatisfied air. "Monsieur *de* Flesselles, a noble, that is to say, an enemy of the people."

"Why no," they replied to him; "he is a man of talent."

Billot ascended the staircase of the Hôtel de Ville.

In the ante-chamber he met an usher.

"I wish to speak with Monsieur Flesselles," said he, perceiving that the usher was approaching him to ask him what he wanted.

"Impossible!" replied the usher; "he is now occupied in drawing up the lists of a militia force which the city is about to organize."

"That falls out marvellously well," observed Billot, "for I also am organizing a militia, and as I have already three thousand men enlisted, I am as good as Monsieur de Flesselles, who has not a single soldier yet afoot. Enable me, therefore, to speak with Monsieur de Flesselles, and that instantly. Oh, look out of the window, if you will!"

The usher had, in fact, cast a rapid glance upon the quays, and had perceived Billot's men. He therefore hastened to inform the mayor, to whom he showed the three thousand men in question, as a postscript to his message.

This inspired the provost with a sort of respect for the person who wished to see him: he left the council-room and went into the ante-chamber, looking about for his visitor.

He perceived Billot, guessed that he was the person, and smiled.

"It was you who were asking for me, was it not?" said he.

"You are Monsieur de Flesselles, Provost of the Merchants, I believe?" replied Billot.

"Yes, sir. In what way, may I ask, can I be of service to you? Only speak quickly, for my mind is much occupied."

"Good Monsieur Provost," continued Billot, "how many powers are there in France?"

"Why, that is as people may choose to understand it, my dear sir," replied Flesselles.

"Say it, then, as you yourself understand it."

"Were you to consult Monsieur Bailly, he would tell you there is but one, the National Assembly; if you consult Monsieur de Dreux Brézé, he would also tell you there is but one — the king."

"And you, Monsieur Provost, — of these two opinions, which is yours?"

"My own opinion, and above all at the present moment, is, that there is but one."

"The assembly, or the king?" demanded Billot

"Neither the one nor the other; it is the nation," replied Flesselles, playing with the frill of his shirt.

"Ah! ah! the nation!" cried the farmer.

"Yes; that is to say, those gentlemen who are waiting down yonder on the quay with knives and roasting-spits. The nation, — by that I mean everybody."

"You may perhaps be right, Monsieur de Flesselles,"

replied Billot, "and they were not wrong in telling me that you are a man of talent."

De Flesselles bowed.

"To which of these three powers do you think of appealing, sir?" asked Flesselles.

"Upon my faith," said Billot, "I believe that when one has anything very important to ask, a man had better address himself at once to God and not to his saints."

"Which means to say that you are about to address yourself to the king."

"I am inclined to do so."

"Would it be indiscreet to inquire what it is you think of asking of the king?"

"The liberation of Doctor Gilbert, who is in the Bastille."

"Doctor Gilbert?" solemnly asked Monsieur de Flesselles; "he is a writer of pamphlets, is he not?"

"Say a philosopher, sir."

"That is one and the same thing, my dear Monsieur Billot. I think you stand but a poor chance of obtaining what you desire from the king."

"And why so?"

"In the first place, because, if the king sent Doctor Gilbert to the Bastille he must have had reasons for so doing."

"'T is well," replied Billot; "he shall give me his reasons on the subject, and I will give him mine."

"My dear Monsieur Billot, the king is just now very busy, and he would not even receive you."

"Oh, if he does not receive me, I shall find some means of getting in without his permission!"

"Yes; and when you have once got in, you will find there Monsieur de Dreux Brézé, who will have you shoved out of doors."

"Who will have me shoved out of doors?"

"Yes; he wished to do that to the National Assembly altogether. It is true that he did not succeed; but that is a stronger reason for his being in a furious rage, and taking his revenge on you."

"Very well; then I will apply to the Assembly."

"The road to Versailles is intercepted."

"I will go there with my three thousand men."

"Take care, my dear sir. You would find on your road some four or five thousand Swiss soldiers and two or three thousand Austrians, who would make only a mouthful of you and your three thousand men. In the twinkling of an eye you would be swallowed."

"Ah! the devil! What ought I to do, then?"

"Do what you please; but do me the service to take away your three thousand men who are beating the pavement yonder with their pikes, and who are smoking. There are seven or eight thousand pounds of powder in our cellars here. A single spark might blow us all up."

"In that case, I think, I will neither address myself to the King nor to the National Assembly. I will address myself to the nation, and we will take the Bastille."

"And with what?"

"With the eight thousand pounds of powder that you are going to give me, Monsieur Provost."

"Ah, really!" said Flesselles, in a jeering tone.

"It is precisely as I say, sir. The keys of the cellars, if you please."

"Hey! you are jesting, sure!" cried the provost.

"No, sir, I am not jesting," said Billot.

And seizing Flesselles by the collar of his coat with both hands, — "The keys," cried he, "or I call up my men."

Flesselles turned as pale as death. His lips and his teeth were closed convulsively; but when he spoke, his voice was in no way agitated, and he did not even change the ironical tone he had assumed.

"In fact, sir," said he, "you are doing me a great service by relieving me from the charge of this powder. I will therefore order the keys to be delivered to you, as you desire. Only please not to forget that I am your first magistrate, and that if you have the misfortune to conduct yourself towards me before others in the way you have done when alone with me, an hour afterwards you would be hanged by the town guards. You insist on having this powder?"

"I insist," replied Billot.

"And you will distribute it yourself?"

"Myself."

"And when?"

"This very moment."

"Your pardon. Let us understand each other. I have business which will detain me here about a quarter of an hour, and should rather like, if it is the same to you, that the distribution should not be commenced until I have left the place. It has been predicted to me that I shall die a violent death; but I acknowledge that I have a very decided repugnance to being blown into the air."

"Be it so. In a quarter of an hour, then. But now, in my turn, I have a request to make."

"What is it?"

"Let us both go close up to that window."

"For what purpose?"

"I wish to make you popular."

"I am greatly obliged; but in what manner?"

"You shall see."

Billot took the provost to the window, which was open, and called out to his friends in the square below.

"My friends," said he, "you still wish to take the Bastille, do you not?"

"Yes, yes, yes!" shouted three or four thousand voices.

"But you want gunpowder, do you not?"

"Yes! gunpowder! gunpowder!"

"Well, then, here is his honor the provost, who is willing to give us all he has in the cellars of the Hôtel de Ville. Thank him for it, my friends."

"Long live the Provost of the Merchants! Long live Monsieur de Flesselles!" shouted the whole crowd.

"Thanks, my friends: thanks for myself, thanks for him," cried Billot.

Then, turning towards the provost: —

"And now, sir," said Billot, "it is no longer necessary that I should take you by the collar, while here alone with you, or before all the world; for if you do not give me the gunpowder, the nation, as you call it, the nation will tear you to pieces."

"Here are the keys, sir," said the provost. "You have so persuasive a mode of asking, that it does not even admit a refusal."

"What you say really encourages me," said Billot, who appeared to be meditating some other project.

"Ah, the deuce! Can you have anything else to ask of me?"

"Yes. Are you acquainted with the governor of the Bastille?"

"Monsieur de Launay?"

"I do not know what his name is."

"His name is De Launay."

"Be it so. Well, do you know Monsieur de Launay?"

"He is a friend of mine."

"In that case, you must desire that no misfortune should happen to him."

"In fact, I should desire it."

"Well, then, the way to prevent any misfortune happening to him is, that he should surrender the Bastille to me, or, at all events, liberate the doctor."

"You do not imagine, surely, that I should have influence enough with him to induce him to surrender to you either his prisoner or his fortress, do you?"

"That is my affair. All that I ask is, that you will give me an introduction to him."

"My dear Monsieur Billot, I forewarn you that if you go into the Bastille you will go into it alone."

"Very well."

"I forewarn you, moreover, that if you enter it alone you will perhaps not get out again."

"Marvellously well."

"Then I will give you your permission to go into the Bastille."

"I will wait for it."

"But it will be on still another condition."

"What is that?"

"It is that you will not come to me again to-morrow and ask for a passport to the moon. I forewarn you that I am not acquainted with any one in those regions."

"Flesselles! Flesselles!" said a hollow and threatening voice from behind the Provost of the Merchants, "if you continue to wear two faces, — the one which laughs with the aristocrats, the other which smiles upon the people, — you will perhaps receive between this and to-morrow morning a passport for a world from which no one returns."

The provost turned round, shuddering.

"Who is it that speaks thus?" said he.

"'T is I, Marat."

"Marat, the philosopher! Marat, the physician!" exclaimed Billot.

"Yes," replied the same voice.

"Yes, Marat, the philosopher; Marat, the physician," repeated Flesselles; "who in this last capacity ought to attend to curing lunatics, which would have been a sure means of now having a goodly number of patients."

"Monsieur de Flesselles," replied the lugubrious interlocutor, "this worthy citizen has asked you for a passport which will facilitate his seeing Monsieur de Launay. I would observe to you, that not only is he waiting for you, but that three thousand men are waiting for him."

"'T is well, sir; he shall soon have it."

Flesselles went to a table, passed one hand over his brow, and with the other seizing a pen, he rapidly wrote several lines.

"Here is your safe-conduct," said he, delivering the paper to Billot.

"Read it," said Marat.

"I cannot read," said Billot.

"Well, then, give it to me; I can read."

Billot handed the paper to Marat.

This passport was conceived in the following terms:

M. Governor, — We, Provost of the Merchants of the city of Paris, send to you M. Billot, in order to concert with you as to the interests of the said city.

De Flesselles.

July 14, 1789.

"Good!" said Billot, "give it to me."

"You find this passport good as it is?" said Marat.

"Undoubtedly."

"Stop a minute. The provost is going to add a postscript to it, which will make it better."

And he went up to Flesselles, who had remained standing, his hand on the table, and who looked with a disdainful air at the two men with whom he was so particularly engaged, and at a third one, half naked, who had just presented himself at the door, leaning upon a musketoon.

It was Pitou, who had followed Billot, and who held himself ready to obey the farmer's orders, be they what they might.

"Sir," said Marat to Flesselles, "the postscript which you are about to add, and which will render the passport so much better, is the following:"

"Say on, Monsieur Marat."

Marat placed the paper on the table, and, pointing with his finger to the place on which the provost was to write the required postscript:—

"The citizen Billot," said he, "having the character of bearer of a flag of truce, I confide his care to your honor."

Flesselles looked at Marat, as if he would rather have smashed his flat face with his fist than do that which he had requested.

"Would you resist, sir?" demanded Marat.

"No," replied Flesselles, "for, after all, you only ask me what is strictly right."

And he wrote the postscript demanded of him.

"However, gentlemen, you will be pleased to observe this well, that I do not answer for the safety of Monsieur Billot."

"And I — I will be answerable for it," said Marat, jerking the paper out of his hands; "for your liberty is the guarantee of his liberty, — your head for the safety of

his head. Here, worthy Billot," continued Marat, "here is your passport."

"Labrie!" cried M. de Flesselles, — "Labrie!"

A lackey in grand livery entered the room.

"My carriage," said the provost.

"It is waiting for you, sir, in the courtyard."

"Let us go, then," said the provost. "There is nothing else which you desire, gentlemen?"

"No," simultaneously replied Billot and Marat.

"Am I to let them pass?" inquired Pitou.

"My friend," said Flesselles to him, "I would observe to you that you are rather too indecently attired to mount guard at my door. If you insist upon remaining here, turn your cartouche-box round in front, and set your back against the wall."

"Am I to let them pass?" Pitou repeated, with an air which indicated that he did not greatly relish the jest of which he had been the subject.

"Yes," said Billot.

Pitou made way for the provost to pass by him.

"Perhaps you were wrong in allowing that man to go," said Marat. "He would have been a good hostage to have kept. But, in any case, let him go where he will, you may feel perfectly assured that I will find him again."

"Labrie," said the Provost of the Merchants, as he was getting into his carriage, "they are going to distribute powder here. Should the Hôtel de Ville perchance blow up, I should like to be out of the way of the splinters. Let us get out of gunshot, Labrie, — out of gunshot."

The carriage rattled through the gateway, and appeared upon the square, on which were growling some four or five thousand persons.

Flesselles was afraid that they might misinterpret his departure, which might be considered as a flight.

He leaned half-way out of the door.

"To the National Assembly," cried he, in a loud voice to the coachman.

This drew upon him from the crowd a loud and continued outburst of applause.

Marat and Billot were on the balcony, and had heard the last words of Flesselles.

"My head against his," said Marat, "that he is not going to the National Assembly, but to the king."

"Would it not be well to have him stopped?" said Billot.

"No," replied Marat, with his hideous smile; "make yourself easy; however quickly he may go, we shall go still quicker than he. But now for the gunpowder."

"Yes, to the gunpowder," said Billot.

And they both went down the great staircase, followed by Pitou.

CHAPTER XV.

MONSIEUR DE LAUNAY, GOVERNOR OF THE BASTILLE.

As Monsieur de Flesselles had said, there were eight thousand pounds of gunpowder in the cellars of the Hôtel de Ville.

Marat and Billot went into the first cellar with a lantern, which they suspended to a hook in the ceiling.

Pitou mounted guard at the door.

The powder was in small kegs, containing each about twenty pounds. Men were stationed upon the stairs, forming a chain which reached the square, and they at once began to send up the kegs.

There was at first a momentary confusion. It was not known whether there would be powder enough for everybody, and they all rushed forward to secure their share. But the chain formed by Billot at length succeeded in making the people wait patiently for their turn, and the distribution was effected with something like an approach to order.

Every citizen received half a pound of powder, — about thirty or forty shots.

But when every one had received the powder, it was perceived that muskets were sadly deficient. There were scarcely five hundred among the whole crowd.

While the distribution was going on, a portion of this furious population who were crying out for arms, went up to the rooms where the electors held their sittings. They were occupied in forming the National Guard, of which the usher had spoken to Billot.

They had just decreed that this civic militia should be composed of forty-eight thousand men. This militia but yet existed in the decree, and they were disputing as to the general who should command it.

It was in the midst of this discussion that the people invaded the Hôtel de Ville. They had organized themselves. They only asked to march ; all they required was arms.

At that moment the noise of a carriage coming into the courtyard was heard. It was the Provost of the Merchants, who had not been allowed to proceed upon his journey, although he had exhibited a mandate from the king, ordering him to proceed to Versailles, and he was brought back by force to the Hôtel de Ville.

"Give us arms ! give us arms !" cried the crowd, as soon as they perceived him at a distance.

"Arms !" cried he ; "I have no arms ; but there must be some at the arsenal."

"To the arsenal ! to the arsenal !" cried the crowd.

And five or six thousand men rushed on to the Quay de la Grève.

The arsenal was empty.

They returned, with bitter lamentations, to the Hôtel de Ville.

The provost had no arms, or rather would not give them. Pressed by the people, he had the idea of sending them to the Chartreux.

The Chartreux opened its gates. They searched it in every direction, but did not find even a pocket-pistol.

During this time Flesselles, having been informed that Billot and Marat were still in the cellars of the Hôtel de Ville, completing the distribution of the gunpowder, proposed to send a deputation to De Launay, to propose to him that he should withdraw the cannon from his ramparts, so as to be out of sight.

That which the evening before had made the crowd hoot most obstreperously was these guns, which, stretching forth their long necks, were seen beyond the turreted parapets. Flesselles hoped that, by causing them to disappear, the people would be contented by the concession, and would withdraw satisfied.

The deputation had just set forth, when the people returned in great fury.

On hearing the cries they uttered, Billot and Marat ran upstairs into the courtyard.

Flesselles, from an interior balcony, endeavored to calm the people. He proposed a decree which should authorize the districts to manufacture fifty thousand pikes.

The people were about to accept this proposal.

"Decidedly this man is betraying us," said Marat.

Then, turning to Billot, —

"Go to the Bastille," said he, "and do what you proposed to do. In an hour I will send you there twenty thousand men, and each man with a musket on his shoulder."

Billot, at first sight, had felt great confidence in this man, whose name had become so popular that it had reached even him. He did not even ask him how he calculated on procuring them. An abbé was there, imbued with the general enthusiasm, and crying, like all the rest, "To the Bastille!" Billot did not like abbés, but this one pleased him. He gave him the charge of continuing the distribution, which the worthy abbé accepted.

Then Marat mounted upon a post. There was at that moment the most frightful noise and tumult.

"Silence!" cried he; "I am Marat, and I wish to speak."

They were at once quieted as if by magic, and every eye was directed towards the orator.

"You wish for arms?" he said.

"Yes, yes!" replied thousands of voices.

"To take the Bastille?"

"Yes! yes! yes!"

"Well then, come with me, and you shall have them."

"And where?"

"To the Invalides, where there are twenty-five thousand muskets. To the Invalides!"

"To the Invalides! to the Invalides!" cried every voice.

"And now," said Marat to Billot, who had just called Pitou; "you will go to the Bastille?"

"Yes."

"Stay. It might happen that before my men arrive you may stand in need of assistance."

"In fact," said Billot, "that is possible."

Marat tore out a leaf from a small memorandum book, and wrote four words upon it with a pencil:—

"This comes from Marat."

Then he drew a sign upon the paper.

"Well!" cried Billot, "what would you have me do with this note, since you do not tell me the name or the address of the person to whom I am to deliver it?"

"As to the address, the man to whom I recommend you has none; as to his name, it is well known. Ask the first workman you may meet for Gonchon, the Mirabeau of the people."

"Gonchon — you will remember that name, Pitou."

"Gonchon or *Gonchonius*," said Pitou. "I shall not forget it."

"To the Invalides! to the Invalides!" howled the mob, with increasing ferocity.

"Well, then, go!" said Marat to Billot; "and may the genius of Liberty march before thee!"

"To the Invalides!" he then cried in his turn.

And he went down the Quai de Gévres, followed by more than twenty thousand men.

Billot, on his side, took with him some five or six thousand. These were all armed in one way or another.

At the moment when they were about to proceed along the bank of the river, and the remainder were going towards the Boulevard, the Provost of the Merchants appeared at a window.

"My friends," said he, "why is it that I see a green cockade in your hats?"

They were the leaves of the linden-trees, of Camille Desmoulins, which many had adopted merely from seeing others wear them, but without even knowing their signification.

"Hope! hope!" cried several voices.

"Yes; but the color that denotes hope is, at the same time, that of the Count d'Artois. Would you have the air of wearing the livery of a prince?"

"No, no!" cried all the crowd in chorus, and Billot louder than the rest.

"Well! then you ought to change that cockade; and, if you will wear a livery, let it at least be that of the city of Paris, the mother of us all, — blue and red, my friends, blue and red."[1]

"Yes, yes," cried every tongue; "blue and red."

Upon these words, every one trampled under foot his green cockade, every one called for ribbons; as if by enchantment, the windows round the square were opened, and blue and red ribbons rained down in floods.

[1] Some time afterwards, Monsieur de Lafayette also made the observation that blue and red were likewise the colors of the House of Orleans, and added to them a third color, white, saying to those who received it from him, "I give you a cockade that will make the tour of the whole world."

But all the ribbons that fell scarcely sufficed for a thousand men.

Instantly aprons, silk gowns, scarfs, curtains, were torn, stripped, and cut in fragments; these fragments were formed into bows, rosettes, and scarfs. Every one took his share.

After which Billot's small army again moved forward.

It kept on recruiting as it advanced; all the arteries of the Faubourg St. Antoine sent to it as it passed the most ardent and the most active of their population.

They reached, in tolerably good order, the end of the Rue Lesdiguières, where already a mass of curious lookers-on — some timid, others calm, and others insolent — were gazing at the towers of the Bastille, exposed to an ardent sun.

The arrival of the popular drums by the Faubourg St. Antoine;

The arrival of about a hundred of the French Guards from the Boulevards;

The arrival of Billot and his troop, at once changed the character and the aspect of the assembled crowd; the timid became emboldened, the calm became excited, and the insolent began to threaten.

"Down with the cannon! down with the cannon!" cried twenty thousand voices, threatening with their clinched fists the heavy guns which stretched forth their brazen necks from the embrasures of the platforms.

Just at that moment, as if the governor of the Bastille was obeying the injunctions of the crowd, some artillerymen approached the guns, which they drew in, till at last they disappeared entirely.

The crowd clapped their hands; they had then become a power, since the governor had yielded to their threats.

Notwithstanding this, the sentinels continued pacing backwards and forwards on the platforms. At every post was an Invalide and a Swiss.

After having cried, "Down with the cannon!" the crowd shouted, "Down with the Swiss!" It was a continuation of the cry of the night before, "Down with the Germans!"

But the Swiss did not the less continue their guard, crossing the Invalides in their measured pacings up and down.

One of those who cried, "Down with the Swiss!" became impatient; he had a gun in his hand; he pointed the muzzle of his gun at the sentinel, and fired.

The ball struck the gray wall of the Bastille, one foot below the coping-stone of the tower, and immediately in front of the spot where the Swiss had passed. At the spot where the shot had struck, it left a white mark, but the sentinel did not stop, and did not even turn his head.

A loud murmur soon arose around the man who had fired, and thus was given the signal of attack, as unheard of as it was senseless, — a murmur more of terror than of anger. Many persons conceived that it was a crime punishable with death to fire a musket-shot at the Bastille.

Billot gazed upon the dark-green mass like to those fabulous monsters which in ancient legends are represented to us as covered with scales. He counted the embrasures at which the cannon might at any given moment be rolled back to their places. He counted the number of muskets the muzzles of which might be directed through the loop-holes at the assembled crowd.

And Billot shook his head, recalling to mind the words uttered by Flesselles.

"We shall never be able to get in there," said he.

"And why shall we never be able to get in?" said a voice close beside him.

Billot turned round and saw a man with a savage countenance, dressed in rags, and whose eyes sparkled like two stars.

"Because it appears to me impossible to take such a mass as that by force."

"The taking of the Bastille," said the man, "is not a deed of war, but an act of faith. Believe, and thou shalt succeed."

"Patience!" said Billot, feeling in his pocket for his passport.

The man was deceived as to his meaning.

"Patience!" cried he, "oh, yes, I understand you! you are fat — you — you look like a farmer."

"And I am one, in fact," said Billot.

"Then I can well understand why you say patience! You have been always well fed; but look behind you for a moment and see those spectres who are now surrounding us. See their dried-up veins, count their bones through the rents in their garments, and then ask them whether they understand the word patience."

"This is one who speaks well," said Pitou, "but he terrifies me."

"He does not terrify me," said Billot; and turning again towards the man: —

"Yes, patience," he said; "but only for another quarter of an hour, that 's all."

"Ah, ah!" cried the man, smiling; "a quarter of an hour; that indeed is not too much. And what will you do in a quarter of an hour?"

"During that time I shall have visited the Bastille, I shall know the number of its garrison, I shall know the

intentions of its governor! I shall know, in fine, the way into it."

"Yes! if after that you could only find the way out of it?"

"Well, supposing that I do not get out of it. There is a man who will come and show me the way."

"And who is this man?"

"Gonchon, the Mirabeau of the people."

The man gave a start. His eyes emitted flashes of fire.

"Do you know him?" inquired he.

"No."

"Well, what mean you, then?"

"Why, I am going to know him; for I was told that the first to whom I might speak on the square before the Bastille would lead me to him. You are on the square of the Bastille; take me to him."

"What do you want with him?"

"To deliver to him this paper."

"From whom is it?"

"From Marat, the physician."

"From Marat! you know Marat!" exclaimed the man.

"I have just left him."

"Where?"

"At the Hôtel de Ville."

"What is he doing?"

"He has gone to arm twenty thousand men at the Invalides."

"In that case, give me that paper. I am Gonchon."

Billot drew back a step.

"You are Gonchon?" cried he.

"My friends," said the man in rags, "here is one who does not know me, and who is asking whether it is true that I am Gonchon."

The crowd burst into a loud laugh. It appeared to all these men that it was impossible that any one could be so ignorant as not to know their favorite orator.

"Long live Gonchon!" cried two or three thousand voices.

"Take it," said Billot, handing the paper to him.

"Friends," cried Gonchon, after having read it, and laying his hand on Billot's shoulder, "this is a brother. Marat recommends him. We can therefore rely upon him. What is your name?" said he to the farmer.

"My name is Billot."

"And mine," rejoined Gonchon, "is Hache, and between us both I trust we shall be able to do something."[1]

The crowd smiled at this sanguinary jest.

"Yes, yes, we shall soon do something," cried they.

"Well! what are we going to do?" asked several voices.

"Why, zounds!" cried Gonchon, "we are going to take the Bastille."

"This is as it should be," cried Billot; "that is what I call speaking. Listen to me, brave Gonchon. How many men have you to back you?"

"Thirty thousand, or somewhere near that."

"Thirty thousand men you have at your disposal, twenty thousand will soon be here from the Invalides, and ten thousand are already here; why, 't is more than enough to insure our success, or we shall never succeed at all."

"We shall succeed," replied Gonchon.

"I believe so. Well, then, call together your thirty thousand men. I, in the mean time, will go to the governor, and summon him to surrender. If he surrenders,

[1] Billot, in French, means block, — the block on which criminals' heads are struck off. Hache means axe. — TRANSLATOR.

so much the better; we shall avoid much bloodshed. If he will not surrender, the blood that will be spilled will fall upon his head; and in these days, blood that is spilled in an unjust cause brings down misfortunes with it. Ask the Germans if it be not so."

"How long do you expect to remain with the governor?" asked Gonchon.

"As long as I possibly can, until the Bastille is completely invested. If it be possible, when I come out again, the attack will begin."

"'T is understood."

"You do not mistrust me?" said Billot to Gonchon, holding out his hand to him.

"Who, I?" replied Gonchon, with a smile of disdain, at the same time pressing the hand of the stout farmer, and with a strength that could not have been expected from his emaciated appearance; "I mistrust you! and for what reason, pray? If it were my will, upon a word, a sign given by me, I could have you pounded like glass, even were you sheltered by those formidable towers, which to-morrow will no longer exist, — were you protected by these soldiers, who this evening will have espoused our party or will have ceased to exist. Go, then, and rely on Gonchon as he relies on Billot."

Billot was convinced, and walked towards the entrance of the Bastille, while the strange person with whom he had been conversing darted down the faubourg, amid shouts, repeated a thousand times, of —

"Long live Gonchon! Long live the Mirabeau of the people!"

"I do not know what the Mirabeau of the nobles may be," said Pitou to Billot, "but I think our Mirabeau a hideously ugly personage."

CHAPTER XVI.

THE BASTILLE AND ITS GOVERNOR.

We will not describe the Bastille; it would be useless. It lives as an eternal image, both in the memory of the old and in the imagination of the young.

We shall content ourselves with merely stating that, seen from the Boulevard, it presented, in front of the square then called Place de la Bastille, two twin towers, while its two fronts ran parallel with the banks of the canal which now exists.

The entrance to the Bastille was defended, in the first place, by a guardhouse, then by two lines of sentinels, and besides these by two drawbridges.

After having passed through these several obstacles, you came to the courtyard of the government house, — that is to say, the residence of the governor.

From this courtyard a gallery led to the ditches of the Bastille.

At this other entrance, which opened upon the ditches, was a drawbridge, a guardhouse, and an iron gate.

At the first entrance they wished to stop Billot; but Billot shows the passport he received from Flesselles, and they allow him to pass on.

Billot then perceives that Pitou is following him. Pitou had no permission; but he would have followed the farmer's steps down to the infernal regions, or would have ascended to the moon.

"Remain outside," said Billot. "Should I not come

out again, it would be well there should be some one to remind the people that I have come in."

"That is perfectly right," said Pitou. "How long am I to wait before I remind them of it?"

"One hour."

"And the casket?" inquired Pitou.

"Ah, you remind me! Well, then, should I not get out again; should Gonchon not take the Bastille, or, in short, if, after having taken it, I should not be found, you must tell Doctor Gilbert, whom they will find perhaps, that men who came from Paris took from me the casket which he confided to my care five years ago; that I, on the instant, started off to inform him of what had happened; that, on arriving at Paris, I was informed that he was in the Bastille; that I attempted to take the Bastille, and that in the attempt I left my skin there, which was altogether at his service."

"'T is well, Father Billot," said Pitou; "only 't is rather a long story, and I am much afraid that I may forget it."

"Forget what I have said to you?"

"Yes."

"I will repeat it to you, then."

"No," said a voice close to Billot's ear; "it would be better to write it."

"I do not know how to write," said Billot.

"I do. I am an usher."

"Ah! you are an usher, are you?" inquired Billot.

"Stanislaus Maillard, usher in the Court of the Châtelet."

And he drew from his pocket a long ink-horn, in which there were pens, paper, and ink; in fine, all that was necessary for writing.

He was a man about forty-five years old, tall, thin, and

grave-looking, dressed entirely in black, as became his profession.

"Here is one who looks confoundedly like an undertaker," muttered Pitou.

"You say," inquired the usher, with great calmness, "that men who came from Paris carried off a casket which Dr. Gilbert confided to you?"

"Yes."

"That is a punishable crime."

"These men belonged to the police of Paris."

"Infamous robbers!" muttered Maillard.

Then, handing the paper to Pitou:—

"Here, take this, young man," said he; "it is the memorandum you require; and should he be killed,"—he pointed to Billot—"should you be killed, it is to be hoped that I shall not be killed too."

"And should you not be killed, what would you do?" asked Pitou.

"I would do that which you were to have done," replied Maillard.

"Thanks," said Billot.

And he held out his hand to the usher.

The usher grasped it with a vigor which could not have been anticipated from his lank meagre body.

"Then I may fully depend upon you?" said Billot.

"As on Marat—as on Gonchon."

"Good!" said Pitou; "they form a trinity which I am sure I shall not find in paradise."

Then, going up to Billot:—

"Tell me, Father Billot, you will be prudent, will you not?"

"Pitou," replied the farmer, with an eloquence which sometimes astonished people, when proceeding from one who had always led a country life, "forget not what I

say to you, — that the most prudent line of conduct now in France is to be courageous."

And he passed the first line of sentinels, while Pitou returned towards the square.

At the drawbridge he was again obliged to parley.

Billot showed his passport. The drawbridge was let down, the iron-grated gate was opened.

Close beside the gate stood the governor.

This interior court, in which the governor was waiting for Billot, was the courtyard which served as a promenade to the prisoners. It was guarded by eight towers, — that is to say, by eight giants. No window opened into it. Never did the sun shine on its pavement, which was damp and almost muddy. It might have been taken for the bottom of an immense well.

In this courtyard was a clock, supported by figures representing enchained captives, which measured the hours, and from which fell the regular and slow sounds of the minutes as they passed by, as in a dungeon the droppings from the ceiling eat into the pavement slabs on which they fall.

At the bottom of this well the prisoner, lost amid the abyss of stone, for a moment contemplated its cold nakedness, and soon asked to be allowed to return to his cell.

Close beside the grated gate which opened on this courtyard stood, as we have said, Monsieur de Launay.

Monsieur de Launay was a man from forty-five to fifty years of age. On that day he was dressed in a gray coat. He wore the red ribbon of the order of Saint Louis, and in his hand he carried a sword-cane.

This Monsieur de Launay was a man of wicked disposition. The memoirs of Linguet had just bestowed upon him a sorrowful celebrity; he was almost as much detested as the prison itself.

In fact, the De Launays, like the Châteauneufs, the Levrillières, and the Saint Florentins, who held the *lettres de cachet* from father to son, also from father to son transmitted the Bastille to one another.

For, as is well known, it was not the minister of war who appointed the officers of this jail. At the Bastille, all the places were sold to the highest bidder, from that of the governor himself, down to that of the scullion. The governor of the Bastille was a jailer on a grand scale, an eating-house keeper wearing epaulettes, who added to his salary of sixty thousand livres, sixty thousand more which he extorted and plundered.

It was highly necessary that he should recover the capital and interest of the money he had invested.

Monsieur de Launay, in point of avarice, far surpassed his predecessors. This might, perhaps, have arisen from his having paid more for the place, and having foreseen that he would not remain in it so long as they did.

He fed his whole house at the expense of his prisoners. He had reduced the quantity of fuel, and doubled the hire of furniture in each room.

He had the right of bringing yearly into Paris a hundred pipes of wine, free of duty. He sold his right to a tavern-keeper, who brought in wines of excellent quality; then with a tenth part of this duty he purchased the vinegar with which he supplied his prisoners.

The unhappy prisoners in the Bastille had only one consolation; this was a small garden, which had been formed on one of the bastions. There they could walk; there for a few moments they could inhale pure air, the perfumes of the flowers, and enjoy the light.

He rented this little garden to a gardener, and for fifty livres a year which he received from him he had deprived the prisoners of this last enjoyment.

It is true that to rich prisoners his complaisance was extreme. He conducted one of them to the house of his own mistress, who had thus her apartments furnished, and was kept in luxury, without its costing a stiver to him, De Launay.

See the work entitled "The Bastille Unveiled," and you will find in it this fact, and many others besides.

And, notwithstanding, this man was courageous.

Since the previous evening the storm had been threatening around him. Since the previous evening he perceived the waves of this great commotion, which was still ascending, beat against his walls.

And yet he was calm, though pale.

It is true that he had to support him four pieces of artillery, ready prepared to fire; around him, a garrison of Swiss and Invalides; before him, only an unarmed man.

For, on entering the Bastille, Billot had given Pitou his carbine to take care of.

He had understood that within that iron grating which he saw before him, a weapon would be more dangerous than useful to him.

Billot, at a single glance, observed all, — the calm and almost threatening attitude of the governor; the Swiss and Invalides in the several guard-houses and on the platforms; and the silent bustle of the artillerymen, who were stowing their cartridges into the magazines of their ammunition-wagons.

The sentinels held their muskets at the make-ready; the officers had their swords drawn.

The governor remained motionless; Billot was obliged to advance towards him; the iron-grated gate closed behind the bearer of the people's flag of truce with a sinister noise of grating iron, which, brave as he was, made the marrow of his bones chill within him.

"What want you with me again?" said De Launay to him.

"Again!" reiterated Billot; "it appears to me, however, that this is the first time I have seen you, and consequently that you have yet no right to be wearied of seeing me."

"It is because I have been told that you come from the Hôtel de Ville."

"That is true. I came from there."

"Well, then, only just now I received a deputation from the municipality."

"And for what purpose did it come?"

"It came to obtain a promise from me that I would not be the first to fire."

"And you promised that you would not?"

"Yes."

"And was this all?"

"It also came to request that I would draw in my guns."

"And you have them drawn in; I know that, for I was on the square of the Bastille when this manœuvre was executed."

"And you doubtless thought that I was yielding to the threats of the people?"

"Why, zounds! it did look very like it."

"Did I not tell you so, gentlemen?" exclaimed De Launay, turning towards his officers; "did I not tell you that we should be thought capable of such cowardice?"

Then, turning to Billot, —

"And you, — from whom do you come?"

"I come on behalf of the people," proudly replied Billot.

"'T is well," said De Launay, smiling; "but you have some other recommendation, I suppose; for with that

which you set forth, you would not have been allowed to pass the first line of my sentries."

"Yes; I have a safe-conduct from Monsieur de Flesselles, your friend."

"Flesselles! You say that he is my friend," rejoined De Launay, looking intently at Billot, as if he would have read the inmost recesses of his heart. "Whence know you that Monsieur de Flesselles is my friend?"

"Why, I supposed him to be so."

"Supposed!—oh, that is all! 'T is well. Let us see your safe-conduct."

Billot presented the paper to him.

De Launay read it once, then a second time, and turned and twisted it about to discover whether it did not contain some postscript between its pages; held it up to the light, to see whether there were not some lines written between the lines of the missive.

"And this is all he has to say to me?"

"All."

"You are sure?"

"Perfectly sure."

"Nothing verbal?"

"Nothing."

"'T is very strange!" exclaimed De Launay, darting through one of the loop-holes a glance at the crowd assembled in the square before the Bastille.

"But what would you have had him say to you?" said Billot.

De Launay made an impatient gesture.

"Oh nothing, nothing! Come, now, tell me what you want; but speak quickly, for I am pressed for time."

"Well, then, what I want is, that you should surrender the Bastille to us."

"What said you?" cried De Launay, quickly turning

round, as if he thought he had misunderstood the farmer's meaning. "You say — ?"

"I say that I have come in the name of the people, to demand that you surrender the Bastille."

De Launay shrugged his shoulders.

"The people are, in truth, very strange animals," said he.

"Hey!" cried Billot.

"And what do they want to do with the Bastille?"

"They want to demolish it."

"And what the devil has the Bastille to do with the people? Was ever a man of the people put into the Bastille? The people, on the contrary, ought to bless every stone of which the Bastille is formed. Who are they who are put into the Bastille? Philosophers, men of science, aristocrats, ministers, princes, — that is to say, the enemies of the people."

"Well, that proves that the people are not egotists," retorted Billot.

"My friend," said De Launay, with a shade of commiseration in his tone, "it is easy to perceive that you are not a soldier."

"You are quite right. I am a farmer."

"That you do not inhabit Paris."

"In fact, I am from the country."

"That you do not thoroughly know what the Bastille is."

"That is true. I only know what I have seen of it, — that is to say, the exterior walls."

"Well, then, come along with me, and I will show you what the Bastille is."

"Ho! ho!" muttered Billot to himself, "he is going to lead me over some villanous trap-door, which will suddenly open under my feet, and then, good-night, Father Billot."

But the intrepid farmer did not even blink, and showed himself ready to follow the governor of the Bastille.

"In the first place," said De Launay, "you must know that I have powder enough in my cellars to blow up, not only the Bastille itself, but with it at least half of the Faubourg St. Antoine."

"I know that," tranquilly replied Billot.

"Very well; but now look at those four pieces of artillery."

"I see them."

"They enfilade the whole of this gallery, as you can also see; and this gallery is defended, first, by a guard-house; secondly, by two ditches, which only can be crossed with the assistance of two drawbridges; and lastly, by a grated iron gate."

"Oh, I do not say that the Bastille is badly defended," calmly observed Billot; "all that I say is, that it will be well attacked."

"Let us go on," said De Launay.

Billot gave an assenting nod.

"Here is a postern which opens on the ditches," said the governor; "look at the thickness of the walls."

"Somewhere about forty feet."

"Yes; forty at the bottom, and fifteen at the top. You see that, although the people may have good nails, they would break them against these stones."

"I did not say," rejoined Billot, "that the people would demolish the Bastille before taking it. What I said was, that they would demolish it after having taken it."

"Let us go up the steps," said De Launay.

"Let us go up."

They went up some thirty steps.

The governor stopped.

"See," said he, "here is another embrasure, which opens on the passage by which you wish to enter; this is only defended by a rampart gun, but it has already acquired a certain reputation. You know the song —

'O my tender Musette, —
Musette, my only love.'"

"Certainly," said Billot; "I do know it; but I do not think that this is the time to sing it."

"Wait a moment. Well, Marshal Saxe called this small cannon his Musette, because it sung correctly the air he best liked. That is an historical detail."

"Oh!" ejaculated Billot.

"Let us go up higher;" and they continued to climb up the stairs.

They soon reached a platform on the tower called La Compté.

"Ah! ah!" ejaculated Billot.

"What is it?" inquired De Launay.

"You have not had the cannon dismounted."

"I have had them drawn in, that 's all."

"You know that I shall tell the people that cannon are still here."

"Tell them so."

"You will not have them dismounted, then?"

"No."

"Decidedly?"

"The king's cannon are here by the king's order, sir; they can only be dismounted by an order from the king."

"Monsieur de Launay," said Billot, feeling his thoughts rise within him according to the importance of the moment, "the real king, whom I counsel you to obey, is yonder."

And he showed to the governor the gray crowd, some

of whom were still covered with blood from the combat of the preceding evening, and whose undulating movements before the ditches made their arms gleam in the sunshine.

"Sir," said De Launay in his turn, throwing his head back with a haughty air, "you may perhaps acknowledge two kings; but I, the governor of the Bastille, know but one, and he is Louis, the Sixteenth of that name, who has affixed his name to a commission by virtue of which I command here, both men and things."

"You are not, then, a citizen!" cried Billot in anger.

"I am a French gentleman," said the governor.

"Ah! that is true; you are a soldier, and you speak as a soldier."

"You have said the word, sir," said De Launay, bowing. "I am a soldier, and I execute the orders I receive."

"And I, sir," said Billot, "am a citizen, and my duty as a citizen being in opposition with your orders as a soldier, one of us two will die, — whether it be the one who obeys his orders, or the one who fulfils his duty."

"It is probable, sir."

"Then you are determined to fire upon the people?"

"By no means — so long as they do not fire upon me. I have pledged my word to the envoys of Monsieur de Flesselles. You see that the guns have been drawn in, but at the first shot fired from the square upon my castle —"

"Well, at the first shot?"

"I will run to one of these guns, — this one, for instance, — I will myself wheel it to the embrasure, I will point it with my own hands, and I will fire it with the match you see standing here."

"You?"

"Yes, I."

"Oh, if I believed that," said Billot, "before allowing you to commit such a crime —"

"I have told you that I am a soldier, sir, and that I know nothing but my orders."

"Well, then, look!" said Billot, drawing De Launay towards an embrasure, and pointing out to him alternately two different points, the Faubourg St. Antoine and the Boulevard, "yonder are those from whom in future you will receive your orders."

And he showed De Launay two dark, dense, and howling masses, who, compelled to take the form of the Boulevards, undulated like an immense serpent, of which the head and the body could be seen, but the last rings of which were lost to sight, from the unevenness of the ground on which it crawled; and all that could be seen of the gigantic reptile was refulgent with luminous scales.

It was the double troop, to which Billot had given rendezvous on the square of the Bastille, — the one led by Marat, and the other by Gonchon.

On both sides they advanced, brandishing their arms and uttering the most terrific cries.

De Launay turned pale at the sight, and raising his cane: —

"To your guns!" cried he.

Then, advancing towards Billot with a threatening gesture: —

"And you, wretch!" he exclaimed, "you who have come here under the pretext of parleying with me while the others are advancing to the attack, do you know that you deserve to die?"

And he half drew his sword from the cane which concealed it.

Billot saw the movement, and, rapid as the lightning, seized De Launay by the collar and the waistband.

"And you," said he, as he raised him from the ground, "you deserve that I should hurl you over the ramparts, to dash you in pieces against the sides of the ditch! But, God be thanked! I shall fight you in another manner!"

At that moment an immense and universal clamor, ascending from below, and rushing through the air like the wild howlings of the hurricane, reached their ears, and Monsieur de Losme, the major of the Bastille, appeared upon the platform.

"Sir," cried he, addressing himself to Billot, "sir, be pleased to show yourself; all those people yonder believe that some misfortune has befallen you, and they are calling for you."

And in fact the name of Billot, which had been spread among the crowd by Pitou, was heard amidst the clamor.

Billot had loosed his hold, and Monsieur de Launay sheathed his sword.

Then there was a momentary hesitation between these three men; while cries calling for vengeance, and threatening shouts were heard.

"Show yourself then, sir," said De Launay: "not that these clamors intimidate me, but that it may be known that I am a man who loyally keeps his word."

Then Billot put his head between the battlements, making a sign with his hand.

On seeing this, loud shouts of applause rose from the populace. It was, in a manner, the revolution rising from the forehead of the Bastille in the person of this man of the people, who was the first to trample on its platform as a conqueror.

"'T is well, sir," then said De Launay; "all is now terminated between us; you have nothing further to do here. You are called for yonder: go down."

Billot was sensible of this moderation in a man who had him completely in his power; he went down the same staircase by which he had ascended the ramparts, the governor following him.

As to the major, he had remained there; the governor had given him some orders in a whisper.

It was evident that Monsieur de Launay had but one desire, and this was that the bearer of the flag of truce should become his enemy, and that as quickly as possible.

Billot walked across the courtyard without uttering a word. He saw the artillerymen standing by their guns. The match was smoking at the end of a lance.

Billot stepped before them.

"My friends," said he, "remember that I came to request your chief to prevent the spilling of blood, and that he has refused."

"In the name of the king, sir," cried De Launay, stamping his foot, "leave this place!"

"Beware!" said Billot; "if you order me out in the name of the king, I shall come in again in the name of the people."

Then, turning towards the guard-house, before which the Swiss were standing: —

"Come, now," said he, "tell me for which side are you?"

The Swiss soldiers remained silent.

De Launay pointed with his finger to the iron gate.

Billot wished to make a last effort.

"Sir," said he to De Launay, "in the name of the nation! in the name of your brothers!"

"Of my brothers! You call my brothers those men who are howling, 'Down with the Bastille!' 'Death to its governor!' They may be your brothers, sir, but most assuredly they are not mine!"

"In the name of humanity, then!"

"In the name of humanity, which urges you on to come here, with a hundred thousand men, to cut the throats of a hundred unfortunate soldiers shut up in these walls."

"And by surrendering the Bastille you would be doing precisely that which would save their lives."

"And sacrifice my honor."

Billot said no more to him. This logic of the soldier completely overcame him; but turning to the Swiss and Invalides:—

"Surrender, my friends!" cried he; "it is still time. In ten minutes it will be too late."

"If you do not instantly withdraw, sir," in his turn cried De Launay, "on the word of a gentleman, I will order you to be shot!"

Billot paused a moment, crossed his arms over his chest in token of defiance, exchanged a last threatening glance with De Launay, and passed through the gate.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE BASTILLE.

THE crowd was waiting; scorched by the burning July sun, they were trembling, mad with excitement. Gonchon's men had just joined those of Marat. The Faubourg St. Antoine had recognized and saluted its brother, the Faubourg St. Marceau.

Gonchon was at the head of his patriots. As to Marat, he had disappeared.

The aspect of the square was frightful.

On Billot's appearance the shouts redoubled.

"Well?" said Gonchon, going up to him.

"Well, the man is brave," said Billot.

"What mean you by saying 'The man is brave'?" inquired Gonchon.

"I mean to say that he is obstinate."

"He will not surrender the Bastille?"

"No."

"He will obstinately sustain the siege?"

"Yes."

"And you believe that he will sustain it long?"

"To the very death."

"Be it so! Death he shall have!"

"But what numbers of men we are about to expose to death!" exclaimed Billot, doubting assuredly that God had given him the right which generals arrogate to themselves, — as do kings and emperors, — men who have received commissions to shed blood.

"Pooh!" said Gonchon, "there are too many in this world, since there is not bread enough for half the population. Is it not so, friends?" he asked, turning towards the crowd.

"Yes, yes!" they responded, with sublime self-abnegation.

"But the ditch?" observed Billot, inquiringly.

"It is only necessary that it should be filled up at one particular spot," replied Gonchon, "and I have calculated that with the half of the bodies we have here we could fill it up completely; is it not so, friends?"

"Yes, yes!" repeated the crowd, with no less enthusiasm than before.

"Well, then, be it so!" said Billot, though completely overcome.

At that moment De Launay appeared upon the terrace, followed by Major De Losme and two or three officers.

"Begin!" cried Gonchon to the governor.

The latter turned his back without replying.

Gonchon, who would perhaps have endured a threat, could not endure disdain; he quickly raised his carbine to his shoulder, and a man in the governor's suite fell to the ground.

A hundred shots, a thousand musket-shots, were fired at the same moment, as if they had only waited for this signal, and marbled with white the gray towers of the Bastille.

A silence of some seconds succeeded this discharge, as if the crowd itself had been alarmed at that which it had done.

Then a flash of fire, lost in a cloud of smoke, crowned the summit of a tower; a detonation resounded; cries of pain were heard issuing from the closely pressed crowd;

the first cannon-shot had been fired from the Bastille; the first blood had been spilled. The battle had commenced.

What the crowd experienced, which just before had been so threatening, very much resembled terror. That Bastille, defending itself by this sole act, appeared in all its formidable impregnability. The people had doubtless hoped that in those days, when so many concessions had been made to them, the surrender of the Bastille would be accomplished without the effusion of blood.

The people were mistaken. The cannon-shot which had been fired upon them gave them the measure of the Titanic work which they had undertaken.

A volley of musketry, well directed, and coming from the platform of the Bastille, followed closely on the cannon shot.

Then all was again silent for a while, a silence which was interrupted only by a few cries, a few groans, a few wails uttered here and there.

A shuddering, anxious movement could then be perceived among the crowd; it was the people who were picking up their killed and wounded.

But the people thought not of flying, or if they did think of it, they were ashamed of the feeling when they considered their great numbers.

In fact, the Boulevards, the Rue St. Antoine, the Faubourg St. Antoine, formed but one vast human sea; every wave had a head, every head, two flashing eyes, a threatening mouth.

In an instant all the windows of the neighborhood were filled with sharpshooters, even those which were out of gunshot.

Whenever a Swiss soldier or an Invalide appeared upon the terraces or in one of the embrasures, a hundred

muskets were at once aimed at him, and a shower of balls splintered the corners of the stones behind which the soldier was sheltered.

But they soon got tired of firing at insensible walls. It was against human flesh that their balls were directed. It was blood that they wished to see spout forth wherever the balls struck, and not dust.

Numerous opinions were emitted from amid the crowd.

A circle would then be formed around the speaker, and when the people thought the proposal was devoid of sense, they at once left him.

A blacksmith proposed to form a catapult upon the model of the ancient Roman machines, and with it to make a breach in the walls of the Bastille.

The firemen proposed to damp with their engines the priming of the cannon and extinguish the matches of the artillerymen, without reflecting that the most powerful of their engines could not throw water even to two-thirds the height of the walls of the Bastille.

A brewer who commanded the Faubourg St. Antoine, and whose name has since acquired a fatal celebrity, proposed to set fire to the fortress, by throwing into it a quantity of oil which had been seized the night before, and which they were to ignite with phosphorus.

Billot listened to all these mad-brained proposals one after the other. On hearing the last, he seized a hatchet from the hands of a carpenter, and advancing amid a storm of bullets, which struck down all around him numbers of men, huddled together as thickly as the ears in a field of wheat, he reached a small guard-house, near to the first drawbridge, and although the grape-shot was whizzing and cracking against the roof, he ascended it, and by his powerful and well-directed blows succeeded

in breaking the chains, and the drawbridge fell with a tremendous crash.

During the quarter of an hour which this seemingly insensate enterprise had occupied, the crowd were breathless with excitement. At every report, they expected to see the daring workman fall from the roof. The people forgot the danger to which they were exposed, and thought only of the danger which this brave man was incurring. When the bridge fell, they uttered a loud, joyful cry, and rushed into the first courtyard.

The movement was so rapid, so impetuous, so irresistible, that the garrison did not even attempt to prevent it.

Shouts of frantic joy announced this first advantage to Monsieur de Launay.

No one even observed that a man had been crushed to atoms beneath the mass of wood-work. Then the four pieces of artillery which the governor had shown to Billot were simultaneously discharged with a frightful explosion, and swept the first courtyard of the fortress.

The iron hurricane traced through the crowd a long furrow of blood. Ten men shot dead, fifteen or twenty wounded, were the consequences of this discharge.

Billot slid down from the roof of the guard-house to the ground, on reaching which he found Pitou, who had come there he knew not how. Pitou's eyes were quick, as are those of all poachers. He had seen the artillerymen preparing to put their matches to the touch-holes of their guns, and, seizing Billot by the skirts of his jacket, jerked him violently towards him, and thus they were both protected by the angle of the wall from the effects of the first discharge.

From that moment the affair became serious. The tumult was frightful, the combat mortal. Ten thousand muskets were at once fired round the Bastille, more

dangerous in their effect to the besiegers than to the besieged.

At length a cannon served by the French Guards had mixed its thunder with the rattling of the musketry.

The noise was frightful, but the crowd appeared to be more and more intoxicated by it; and this noise began to terrify even the besieged, who, calculating their own small number, felt they could never equal the noise which was then deafening them.

The officers of the Bastille felt instinctively that their soldiers were becoming disheartened. They snatched their muskets from them, and themselves fired them at the crowd.

At this moment, and amid the noise of artillery and musketry, amid the howlings of the crowd, as some of them were rushing to pick up the dead bodies of their companions to form of them a new incitement, — for their gaping wounds would cry aloud for vengeance against the besieged, — there appeared at the entrance of the first courtyard a small group of unarmed, quiet citizens. They made their way through the crowd, and advanced, ready to sacrifice their lives, protected only by a white flag, which preceded them, and which intimated that they were the bearers of a message to the governor.

It was a deputation from the Hôtel de Ville. The electors knew that hostilities had commenced, and, anxious to prevent the effusion of blood, had compelled Flesselles to send new proposals to the governor.

The deputies came, therefore, in the name of the city, to summon Monsieur de Launay to cease firing; and, in order to guarantee at once the lives of the citizens, his own, and those of the garrison, to propose that he should receive one hundred men of the civic guard into the interior of the fortress.

This was the rumor which was spread as the deputies advanced. The people, terrified at the enterprise they had undertaken, the people, who saw the dead bodies of their companions carried out in litters, were quite ready to support this proposal. Let De Launay accept a half defeat, and satisfy himself with half a victory.

At their approach the fire of the second courtyard ceased. A sign was made to them that they might approach; and they accordingly advanced, slipping on the ensanguined pavement, striding over carcasses, and holding out their hands to the wounded.

Under this protection the people form themselves into groups. The dead bodies and the wounded are carried out of the fortress; the blood alone remains, marbling with large purple spots the pavement of the courtyard.

The fire from the fortress had ceased. Billot was leaving it, in order to stop that of the besiegers. At the door he meets Gonchon, — Gonchon, altogether unarmed, exposing himself like one inspired, calm, as if he were invulnerable.

"Well," inquired he of Billot, "what has become of the deputation?"

"It has gone into the fortress," replied Billot; "order our men to cease firing."

"It is useless," said Gonchon, "they will not consent."

"That matters not," rejoined Billot; "it is our duty to make the attempt. Let us respect the usages of war, since we have become soldiers."

"Be it so," said Gonchon.

Then, addressing himself to two men in the crowd, who appeared to command under him the whole of the assembled mass, —

"Go, Elie, — go, Hullin," said he, "and see that not a musket-shot be fired."

The two aides-de-camp rushed out, and, obeying the orders of their chief, pressed through the crowded masses, and soon the firing of the musketry diminished, and then ceased altogether.

A momentary quiet was established. Advantage was taken of it to attend to the wounded, the number of whom had already amounted to thirty-five or forty.

During this respite the prison clock struck two. The attack had begun at noon; the combat had already lasted two hours.

Billot had returned to his post, and it was Gonchon in his turn who followed him.

His eyes were turned anxiously towards the gate. His impatience was visible.

"What is the matter with you?" inquired Billot.

"The matter is," replied Gonchon, "that if the Bastille is not taken within two hours from this time all is lost."

"And why so?"

"Because the court will be informed of the work we are about, and will despatch the Swiss to us, under Besenval, and Lambesq's dragoons; so that we shall then be caught between three fires."

Billot was compelled to acknowledge that there was some truth in what Gonchon was saying.

At length the deputies reappeared. From their countenances it was evident they had obtained no concession.

"Well," cried Gonchon, whose eyes sparkled with delight, "what did I tell you? Things that are predicted must happen. The accursed fortress is condemned!"

Then, without waiting even to put a question to the deputation, he sprang out of the first courtyard, crying, —

"To arms, my children! — to arms! The commandant refuses."

And, in fact, the governor had scarcely read the letter from Flesselles, when his countenance brightened; and instead of acceding to the proposals which had been made to him, he exclaimed, —

"Gentlemen Parisians, you have insisted on a battle: and now it is too late to speak of treating."

The bearers of the flag of truce persisted in urging their suit. They represented to De Launay all the evils which his defending the castle might entail; but he would not listen to them, and he concluded by saying to the deputation what he had said two hours before to Billot, —

"Leave the fortress, or I will have you shot."

And the bearers of the flag of truce were compelled to depart.

On this occasion it was De Launay who resumed the offensive. He appeared burning with impatience.

Before the deputies had reached the gate of the court-yard, the Musette of Marshal Saxe played a tune, and three persons fell, — one of them dead, two others wounded.

One of the wounded was a French Guard; the other, one of the deputies.

On seeing a man whose office should have rendered him sacred, carried forth covered with blood, the crowd became more enraged than ever.

Gonchon's two aides-de-camp had returned to their places at his side; but each of them had had time to go home to change his dress.

It is true that one of them lived near the arsenal, the other in the Rue de Charonne.

Hullin, who had in the first place been a watchmaker at Geneva, then *chasseur* to the Marquis de Conflans, returned in his brilliant livery, which gave him the appearance of a Hungarian officer.

Elie, formerly an officer in the Queen's Regiment, had put on his uniform, which inspired the people with greater confidence, as it made them believe that the army was for them and with them.

The firing recommenced with greater fury than ever; and at that moment the major of the Bastille, Monsieur de Losme, approached the governor.

He was a brave and faithful soldier; but there were some remains of the citizen in him, and he saw with much regret what had taken place, and above all, what was likely to ensue.

"Sir," said he to De Launay, "we have no provisions, and of this you must be aware."

"I know it," replied the governor.

"You also know that we have no orders."

"I beg your pardon, Monsieur de Losme; my orders are to keep the gates of the Bastille closed, and it is for that purpose that the keys are intrusted to me."

"Sir, the keys are used as well to open the gates as to close them. Beware that you do not cause the massacre of the whole of the garrison, without saving the castle, — two triumphs on the same day. Look at those men whom we are killing; they appear to spring up from beneath the pavement. This morning there were at first only five hundred of them; three hours ago there were ten thousand. They are more than sixty thousand now; to-morrow they will be a hundred thousand. When our guns shall be silenced, and it must at last end in that, they will be strong enough to take the Bastille with their hands."

"You speak not like a soldier, Monsieur de Losme."

"I speak like a Frenchman, sir. I say that his Majesty, not having given us any order, — I say that the Provost of the Merchants, having made us a proposal

which was a very acceptable one, which was that of admitting a hundred men of the civil guard into the castle, you might, to avoid the evils which I foresee, accede to the proposal of Monsieur de Flesselles."

"In your opinion, then, Monsieur de Losme, the power which represents the city of Paris is a power which we ought to obey?"

"In the absence of the direct authority of his Majesty, yes, sir, it is my opinion."

"Well, then," said De Launay, leading the major into a corner of the courtyard, "read that, Monsieur de Losme."

And he handed him a small square piece of paper.

The major read it.

Hold firm! I amuse the Parisians with cockades and promises. Before the close of the day, Monsieur de Besenval will send you a reinforcement.

DE FLESSELLES.

"How, then, did this note reach you, sir?" inquired the major.

"In the letter which the gentlemen of the deputation brought me. They thought they were delivering to me a request to surrender the Bastille, while they were delivering to me an order to defend it."

The major bowed his head.

"Go to your post, Monsieur de Losme, and do not leave it until I send for you."

Monsieur de Losme obeyed.

De Launay very quietly refolded the letter, and put it into his pocket. He then returned to his artillerymen and recommended them to fire low, and to take good aim.

The artillerymen obeyed, as Monsieur de Losme had obeyed.

But the fate of the fortress was predestined. No human power could delay its fulfilment.

To every cannon-shot the people replied by shouting, — "We will have the Bastille!"

And while mouths were shouting, arms were vigorously acting.

Among the voices which shouted most energetically, among the arms which were acting the most efficaciously, were the voices and arms of Pitou and Billot.

Only each of them proceeded according to his different nature.

Billot, courageous and confident, had like a bull-dog, from the first rushed forward, defying balls and grape-shot.

Pitou, prudent and circumspect, like the fox, Pitou, endowed to a supreme degree with the instinct of self-preservation, made use of all his faculties to watch the danger and avoid it.

His eyes knew the embrasures which sent forth the most deadly fire; they distinguished the almost imperceptible movement of the brazen mouth which was about to be fired. He had learned to divine the precise moment when the battery gun was about to be fired across the drawbridge.

Then his eyes having performed their office, it was the turn of his limbs to work for their proprietor.

His shoulders were drawn in, his chest contracted, his whole body did not seem to offer a larger surface than a plank when seen edgeways.

In these movements of Pitou, of the chubby Pitou, — for Pitou was thin only in the legs, — there remained only a geometrical line, which had neither breadth nor thickness.

He had selected for his post a corner in the passage

from the first drawbridge to the second, a sort of vertical parapet formed by jutting stones. His head was protected by one of these stones, his body by another, his knees by a third, and Pitou congratulated himself that nature and the art of fortification were thus so agreeably combined that a stone was given to him to protect each of the parts where a wound might have proved mortal.

From his corner, in which he was covered like a hare in its form, he now and then fired a shot, but merely for form's sake, for he had before him only walls and pieces of timber; but this evidently pleased Billot, who from time to time called out, —

"Fire, you lazy fellow, fire!"

And he, in his turn, would cry to Billot, but in order to calm his exuberant ardor instead of exciting it, —

"Don't expose yourself so much, Father Billot."

Or else: —

"Take care of yourself, Monsieur Billot, there is a cannon pointed at you; there, I have just heard them cocking the Musette."

And scarcely had Pitou uttered these words, so full of foresight, than the cannon belched forth its grape-shot, sweeping the passage between the bridges.

Notwithstanding all these injunctions, Billot performed prodigies of strength and activity, but of perfect inutility. Not being able to shed his blood, — and assuredly it was not his fault, — he shed large and abundant drops of perspiration.

Ten times did Pitou seize him by the skirts of his jacket, and pulled him to the ground in spite of his great strength, at the moment when a discharge would have assuredly swept him off.

But each time Billot jumped up again, not only like Antæus with renewed strength, but with some new idea.

At one time this idea consisted in venturing upon the platform of the bridge to hack at the beams which the chains upheld, as he had before done.

Then Pitou uttered fearful howls to restrain the farmer, and finding that his howling was of no avail, he would rush from his place of safety to him, crying, —

"Monsieur Billot, my dear Monsieur Billot, why, Madame Billot will be a widow if you go on in this way."

And the Swiss soldiers could be seen, aiming their muskets obliquely through the embrasure of the Musette, to hit the audacious man who was endeavoring to reduce their bridge to chips.

At another time he called upon his men to bring up a cannon to destroy the head-work of the bridge; but then the Musette was fired, the gunners retreated, and Billot remained alone to load the gun and fire it, which again brought out Pitou from his retreat.

"Monsieur Billot," cried he, "Monsieur Billot, in the name of Mademoiselle Catherine I conjure you, reflect a moment. Should you get yourself killed, Mademoiselle Catherine will be an orphan."

And Billot yielded to this reason, which appeared to have much more influence on his mind than the first.

At length the fruitful imagination of the farmer gave birth to another idea.

He ran towards the square, crying, —

"A cart! Bring a cart here!"

Pitou considered that that which was good would be rendered excellent by being doubled. He followed Billot, vociferating, —

"Two carts! two carts!"

And immediately ten carts were brought.

"Some straw and some dry hay!" cried Billot

"Some straw and some dry hay!" reiterated Pitou.

And almost instantly two hundred men came forward, each carrying a truss of straw or hay.

They were obliged to call out that they had ten times more than they wanted. In an hour there was a heap of forage which would have equalled the height of the Bastille.

Billot placed himself between the shafts of a cart loaded with straw, and instead of dragging it, he pushed it on before him.

Pitou did the same, without knowing what it could be for, but thinking that he could not do better than to imitate the farmer.

Elie and Hullin divined Billot's intention. They each seized a cart and pushed it before them into the court-yard.

They had scarcely entered, when they were assailed by a discharge of grape-shot. They heard the balls strike with a whizzing sound among the straw or hay, or against the wood-work of the carts; but none of the assailants received a wound.

As soon as this discharge was over, two or three hundred men with muskets rushed on behind those who were pushing forward the carts, and, sheltered by those moving ramparts, they lodged themselves beneath the apron of the bridge itself.

There Billot drew from his pocket a flint, a steel, and some tinder, formed a match by rubbing gunpowder on paper, and set fire to it.

The powder ignited the paper, and the paper ignited the straw and hay.

Each formed a torch for himself, and the four carts were simultaneously set fire to.

The flames reached the apron, caught the timbers with

their sharp teeth, and ran along the wood-work of the bridge.

A shout of joy then uttered from the courtyard was taken up by the crowd in the Square St. Antoine, and reiterated with deafening clamors. They saw the smoke rising above the walls, and they hence imagined that something fatal to the besieged was occurring.

In fact the red-hot chains detached themselves from the beams. The bridge fell half broken and half destroyed by fire, smoking and cracking. The firemen rushed forward with their engines, and soon extinguished the flames upon the bridge.

The governor ordered the Invalides to fire upon the people, but they refused.

The Swiss alone obeyed; but they were not artillerymen; they were therefore obliged to abandon the guns.

The French Guards, on the contrary, seeing that the artillery was silenced, brought up their gun and planted it before the gate; their third shot shivered it to pieces.

The governor had gone up to the platform of the castle to see whether the promised reinforcement was approaching, when he found himself suddenly enveloped in smoke. It was then that he precipitately descended and ordered the artillerymen to fire.

The refusal of the Invalides exasperated him. The breaking down of the gate made him at once comprehend that all was lost.

Monsieur de Launay knew that he was hated. He felt that there was no salvation for him. During the whole time that the combat had lasted, he had matured the idea of burying himself beneath the ruins of the Bastille.

At the moment he felt assured that all further defence was hopeless, he snatched a match from the hand of one

of the artillerymen, and sprang towards the cellar which served as a powder-magazine.

"The powder! the powder!" cried twenty terrified voices; "the powder! the powder!"

They saw the burning match in the governor's hand. They guessed his purpose. Two soldiers rush forward and cross their bayonets before his breast just at the moment when he had opened the door.

"You may kill me," said De Launay, "but you cannot kill me quick enough to prevent me letting this match fall among the powder-casks; and then besieged and besiegers will all be blown to atoms."

The two soldiers stopped. Their bayonets remained crossed before De Launay's breast, but De Launay was still their commander, for all felt that he had their lives in his power. His action had nailed every one to the spot on which he stood. The assailants perceived that something extraordinary was happening. They looked anxiously into the courtyard, and saw the governor threatened and threatening in his turn.

"Hear me," cried De Launay to the besiegers; "as surely as I hold this match in my hand, with which I could exterminate you all, should any one of you make a single step to enter this courtyard, so surely will I set fire to the powder."

Those who heard these words imagined that they already felt the ground tremble beneath their feet.

"What do you wish; what do you ask?" cried several voices with an accent of terror.

"I wish a capitulation," replied De Launay, "an honorable capitulation."

The assailants pay but little attention to what the governor said; they cannot credit such an act of despair; they wish to enter the courtyard. Billot is at

their head. Suddenly Billot trembles and turns pale; he just remembers Dr. Gilbert.

As long as Billot had thought only of himself, it was a matter of little importance to him whether the Bastille was blown up, and he blown up with it; but Gilbert's life must be saved at any cost.

"Stop!" exclaimed Billot, throwing himself before Elie and Hullin; "stop, in the name of the prisoners!"

And these men who feared not to encounter death themselves retreated, pale and trembling, in their turn.

"What do you demand?" they cried, renewing the question they had previously put to the governor by his own men.

"I demand that you should all withdraw," replied De Launay, fiercely. "I will not accept any proposal, so long as there remains a single stranger in the Bastille."

"But," said Billot, "will you not take advantage of our absence to place yourself again in a state of defence?"

"If the capitulation is refused, you shall find everything in the state it now is, — you at that gate, I where I am now standing."

"You pledge your word for that?"

"On the honor of a gentleman."

Some of them shook their heads.

"On the honor of a gentleman," reiterated De Launay. "Is there any one here who can still doubt, when a gentleman has pledged his honor?"

"No, no, no!" repeated five hundred voices.

"Let paper, pen, and ink be brought here to me."

The orders of the governor were instantly obeyed.

"'T is well," said De Launay.

Then, turning towards the assailants: —

"And now you must retire."

Billot, Hullin, and Elie set the example, and were the first to withdraw.

All the others followed them.

De Launay placed the match by his side, and began writing the capitulation on his knee.

The Invalides and the Swiss soldiers who felt that their existence depended on the result, gazed at him, while he was writing, with a sort of respectful terror.

De Launay looked round before allowing his pen to touch the paper. He saw that the courtyard was free of all intruders.

In an instant the people outside were informed of all that had happened within the fortress.

As Monsieur de Losme had said, the population seemed to spring up from beneath the pavement. One hundred thousand men surrounded the Bastille.

They were no longer merely laborers and artisans, but citizens of every class had joined them. They were not merely men in the prime of life, but children and old men had rushed forward to the fight.

And all of them had arms of some description, all of them shouted vehemently.

Here and there among the groups was to be seen a woman in despair, with hair dishevelled, wringing her hands, and uttering maledictions against the granite giant.

She is some mother whose son the Bastille has just annihilated, some daughter whose father the Bastille has just levelled with the ground, some wife whose husband the Bastille has just exterminated.

But during some moments no sounds had issued from the Bastille, no flames, no smoke. The Bastille had become as silent as the tomb.

It would have been useless to endeavor to count the

spots made by the balls which had marbled its surface. Every one had wished to fire a ball at the stone monster, the visible symbol of tyranny.

Therefore, when it was rumored in the crowd that the Bastille was about to capitulate, that its governor had promised to surrender, they could scarcely credit the report.

Amid this general doubt, as they did not yet dare to congratulate themselves, as they were silently awaiting the result, they saw a letter pushed forth through a loop-hole on the point of a sword. Only between this letter and the besiegers there was the ditch of the Bastille, wide, deep, and full of water.

Billot calls for a plank. Three are brought and are pushed across the ditch, but, being too short, did not reach the opposite side. A fourth is brought, which lodges on either side of the ditch.

Billot had them lashed together as he best could, and then ventured unhesitatingly upon the trembling bridge.

The whole crowd remained breathlessly silent; all eyes were fixed upon the man who appears suspended above the ditch, whose stagnant waters resemble those of the river Cocytus.

Pitou tremblingly seated himself on the edge of the slope, and hid his head between his knees.

His heart failed him, and he wept.

When Billot had got about two thirds of the way over the plank, it twisted beneath his feet. Billot extends his arms, falls, and disappears in the ditch.

Pitou utters a cry of horror and throws himself into the ditch, like a Newfoundland dog anxious to save his master.

A man then approached the plank from which Billot had just before been precipitated.

Without hesitation he walked across the temporary bridge. This man is Stanislaus Maillard, the usher of the Châtelet.

When he had reached the spot below which Pitou and Billot were struggling in the muddy ditch, he for a moment cast a glance upon them, and seeing that there was no doubt they would regain the shore in safety, he continued to walk on.

Half a minute afterwards he had reached the opposite side of the ditch, and had taken the letter which was held out to him on the point of a sword.

Then, with the same tranquillity, the same firmness of step, he recrossed the ditch.

But at the moment when the crowd were pressing round him to hear the letter read, a storm of musket-balls rained down upon them from the battlements, and a frightful detonation was heard.

One only cry, but one of those cries which announce the vengeance of a whole people, issues from every mouth.

"Trust, then, in tyrants!" exclaimed Gouchon.

And then, without thinking any more of the capitulation, without thinking any more of the powder-magazine, without thinking of themselves or of the prisoners, without desiring, without demanding anything but vengeance, the people rushed into the courtyard, no longer by hundreds of men, but by thousands.

That which prevents the crowd from entering is no longer the musketry, but the gates, which are too narrow to admit them.

On hearing the detonation we have spoken of, the two soldiers who were still watching Monsieur de Launay threw themselves upon him; a third seized the match and extinguished it under his foot.

De Launay drew the sword which was concealed in his cane, and would have turned it against his own breast, but the soldiers plucked it from him and snapped it in two.

He then felt that all he could do was to abide the result; he therefore tranquilly awaited it.

The people rush forward; the garrison open their arms to them, and the Bastille is taken by assault, — by main force, without a capitulation.

The reason for this was that for more than a hundred years the royal fortress had not merely imprisoned inert matter within its walls, it had imprisoned thought also. Thought had thrown down the walls of the Bastille, and the people entered by the breach.

As to the discharge of musketry, which had taken place amid the general silence, during the suspension of hostilities, — as to this unforeseen aggression, as impolitic as it was murderous, it was never known who had ordered it, who had excited it, how it was accomplished.

There are moments when the destiny of a whole nation is being weighed in the scales of Fate. One of them weighs down the other. Every one already thinks he has attained the proposed end. Suddenly some invisible hand lets fall into the other scale the blade of a poniard or a pistol ball.

Then all changes, and one only cry is heard: "Woe to the vanquished!"

CHAPTER XVIII.

DOCTOR GILBERT.

WHILE the people were thus rushing into the fortress, howling at once with joy and rage, two men were struggling in the muddy waters of the ditch.

These men were Pitou and Billot.

Pitou was supporting Billot. No shot had struck him. He had not been wounded in any way; but his fall had somewhat confused the worthy farmer.

Ropes were thrown to them; poles were held out to them.

Pitou caught hold of a pole, Billot a rope.

Five minutes afterwards they were carried in triumph by the people, and eagerly embraced, notwithstanding their muddy state.

One man gives Billot a glass of brandy, another stuffs Pitou's mouth full of sausages, and gives him wine to wash them down.

A third rubs them down with straw, and wishes to place them in the sun to dry their clothes.

Suddenly an idea, or rather a recollection, shot through the mind of Billot. He tears himself away from their kind cares and rushes into the Bastille.

"To the prisoners!" cried he, "to the prisoners!"

"Yes, to the prisoners!" cried Pitou, in his turn, bounding after the farmer.

The crowd, which until then had thought only of the executioners, shuddered when thinking of their victims.

They with one shout repeated: "Yes, yes, yes, — to the prisoners!"

And a new flood of assailants rush through the barriers, seeming to widen the sides of the fortress by their numbers, and bearing liberty with them to the captives.

A dreadful spectacle then offered itself to the eyes of Billot and Pitou. The excited, enraged, maddened throng had precipitated themselves into the courtyard. The first soldier they had met was at once hacked to pieces.

Gonchon had quietly looked on. Doubtless he had thought that the anger of the people, like the currents of great rivers, does more harm when any impediment is thrown in its way to arrest it than if allowed tranquilly to flow on.

Elie and Hullin, on the contrary, had thrown themselves before the infuriated executioners. They prayed, they supplicated, uttering the sublime lie that they had promised life and safety to the whole garrison.

The arrival of Billot and Pitou was a reinforcement to them.

Billot, whom they were avenging, Billot was living, Billot was not even wounded. The plank had turned under his feet, and that was all; he had taken a mud-bath, and nothing more.

It was, above all, against the Swiss that the people were particularly enraged; but the Swiss were nowhere to be found. They had had time to put on gray frocks, and they were taken either for servants or for prisoners.

The mob hurled large stones at the dial of the clock, and destroyed the figures of the two captives which supported it. They rushed to the ramparts to mutilate the cannon which had vomited forth death upon them. They

even wreaked their vengeance on the stone walls, tearing their hands in endeavoring to displace them. When the first of the conquerors were seen upon the platform, all those who had remained without the fortress, that is to say, a hundred thousand men, shouted with clamorous joy, —

"The Bastille is taken!"

This cry resounded through Paris, and spread itself over the whole of France, as if borne with the rapidity of eagle's wings.

On hearing this cry all hearts were softened, all eyes shed tears, all arms were extended. There were no longer any contending parties; there were no longer any inimical castes. All Parisians felt that they were brothers, all men felt that they were free.

A million of men pressed one another in a mutual embrace.

Billot and Pitou had entered the Bastille, following some and followed by others; what they wished for was, not to claim their share in the triumph; it was the liberty of the prisoners.

When crossing the courtyard of the government house, they passed near a man in a gray coat, who was standing calmly, his hand resting on a gold-headed cane.

This man was the governor. He was quietly waiting either that his friends should come to save him, or that his enemies should come to strike him down.

Billot, on perceiving him, recognized him, uttered a slight exclamation of surprise, and went straight to him.

De Launay also recognized Billot. He crossed his arms and waited, looking at the farmer with an expression that implied, —

"Let us see: is it you that will give me the first blow?"

Billot at once divined the meaning of his look, and stopped.

"If I speak to him," said he to himself, "I shall cause him to be recognized, and should he be recognized, his death is certain."

And yet, how was he to find Doctor Gilbert amid this chaotic confusion? How could he drag from the Bastille the secret which its walls enclosed?

All this hesitation, these heroic scruples, were understood by De Launay.

"What is it that you wish?" asked De Launay, in an undertone.

"Nothing," replied Billot, pointing with his finger to the gate, indicating to him that escape was yet possible; "nothing. I shall be able readily to find Doctor Gilbert."

"Third Bertaudière," replied De Launay, in a gentle and almost affectionate tone of voice.

But he stirred not from the place on which he stood.

Suddenly a voice from behind Billot pronounced these words: —

"Ah! there is the governor."

This voice was so calm, so hollow, that it appeared not to be of this world, and yet each word it had uttered was a sharp poniard turned against the breast of De Launay.

He who had spoken was Gonchon.

These words, like the first sounds of an alarm-bell, excited a fearful commotion; all these men, drunk with revengeful feelings, started on hearing them; they looked around with flaming eyes, perceived De Launay, and at once darted upon and seized him.

"Save him," said Billot, as he passed near Elie and Hullin, "or they will murder him."

"Assist us to do so," said the two men.

"I am obliged to remain here," replied Billot, "for I also have some one to save."

In an instant De Launay had been surrounded by a thousand men, who dragged him along, lifted him up, and were bearing him away.

Elie and Hullin bounded after him, crying, —

"Stop! stop! we promised him that his life should be saved."

This was not true; but the thought of uttering this magnanimous falsehood had risen to the mind of these two generous men at the same moment.

In a second, De Launay, followed by Elie and Hullin, disappeared under the vaulted passage which led from the Bastille, amidst loud voices of, "To the Hôtel de Ville! To the Hôtel de Ville!"

It was a singular spectacle to see this mournful and silent monument, which for four centuries had been tenanted only by prisoners, their jailers, their guards, and a gloomy governor, now become the prey of the people, who ran through the courtyards, ascended and descended the staircases, buzzing like a swarm of flies, and filling this granite hive with noise and movement.

De Launay, a living prey, was to some of the victors of as great value as the dead prey, the captured Bastille.

Billot for a moment or two followed De Launay with his eyes, who was carried rather than led, and appeared to soar above the crowd.

But, as we have said, he soon disappeared. Billot heaved a sigh, looked around him, perceived Pitou, and rushed towards a tower, crying, —

"Third Bertaudière."

A trembling jailer met him on his way.

"Third Bertaudière," said Billot.

"This way, sir," replied the jailer; "but I have not the keys."

"Where are they?"

"They took them from me."

"Citizen, lend me your hatchet," said Billot, to one of the men from the Faubourg.

"I give it to you," replied the latter; "I do not want it any more, since the Bastille is taken."

Billot snatched the hatchet, and ran up a staircase, conducted by the jailer.

The jailer stopped before a door.

"Third Bertaudière?" asked Billot.

"Yes, this is it."

"The prisoner confined in this room is Doctor Gilbert, is it not?"

"I do not know."

"He was brought here only five or six days ago?"

"I do not know."

"Well, then," said Billot, "I shall soon know it."

And he began chopping at the door with his hatchet.

The door was of oak, but it soon flew into splinters beneath the vigorous blows of the robust farmer.

In a few moments he had cut a hole through it and could look into the room.

Billot placed his eye at the opening. Through it he could see the interior of the cell.

In the line of sunshine which penetrated into the dungeon through its grated window a man was standing, his head thrown rather backwards, holding in his hand one of the posts of his bedstead, and in an attitude of defence.

This man had evidently prepared himself to knock down the first person who should enter his room.

Notwithstanding his long beard, notwithstanding his pallid countenance, notwithstanding his short-cut hair, Billot recognized him. It was Doctor Gilbert.

"Doctor! doctor!" cried Billot to him, "is it you?"

"Who is it that is calling me?" inquired the prisoner.

"It is I — I, Billot, your friend."

"You, Billot?"

"Yes! yes! — he! he! — we! we!" cried the voices of twenty men, who had run into the passage on hearing the vigorous blows struck by Billot.

"But who are you?"

"We? — why, the conquerors of the Bastille. The Bastille is taken; you are free."

"The Bastille is taken; I am free!" exclaimed the doctor.

And passing both his hands through the opening, he shook the door so violently that the hinges and the lock appeared nearly yielding to his powerful pressure, and part of a panel, already loosened by Billot, broke off, and remained in the prisoner's hands.

"Wait, wait!" said Billot, who was afraid that a second effort of so violent a nature would exhaust his strength, which had been overtaxed; "wait."

And he redoubled his blows.

And indeed, through the opening, which was every moment becoming wider, he could see the prisoner, who had seated himself upon his bench, pale as a spectre, and incapable of raising the bedpost which was lying near him, and who but a few moments before, another Samson, seemed strong enough to shake down the walls of the Bastille.

"Billot! Billot!" murmured he.

"Yes, yes! and I also, my good doctor — I, Pitou — you must remember poor Pitou, whom you placed at

board with his aunt Angélique, — Pitou has come to liberate you."

"But I can get through that hole," cried the doctor.

"No! no!" cried all the voices; "wait."

All those present uniting their strength in one simultaneous effort, some slipping a crowbar between the door and the framework, others using a lever between the lock and doorpost, and the remainder pushing with all the might of their shoulders or their hands, the oak gave a last cracking sound, the wall gave way, and they all of them stumbled, one over the other, into the room.

In a moment Gilbert found himself in the arms of Pitou and Billot.

Gilbert, the little country lad of the Château de Taverney, Gilbert, whom we left bathed in his blood in a cavern of the Azores, was now a man from thirty-four to thirty-five years old, of pale complexion, though he was not sickly, with black hair, eyes penetrating and fixed; never did his gaze lose itself in vacuity; never did it wander; when it was not fixed on some exterior object worthy to attract, it was fixed on his own thought, and became only more profound and more gloomy; his nose was straight, being attached to his forehead in a direct line; it rose above a lip of rather scornful expression, which, in the slight space between it and the nether lip, allowed one to perceive the dazzling enamel of his teeth. In ordinary times his dress was simple and grave, like that of a Quaker; but this simplicity was closely allied to elegance, from its extreme neatness. His height was somewhat above the medium stature, and he was well formed; as to his strength, we have just seen the feats it could perform when in a state of over-excitement, whether caused by anger or enthusiastic feeling.

Although in prison for five or six days, the doctor had

paid the same attention to his person; his beard, which had grown some few lines, caused the paleness of his complexion to contrast favorably with its darkness, and indicated only a negligence which certainly was not the prisoner's, but his jailer's, who had refused to give him a razor, or to allow him to be shaved.

When he had pressed Billot and Pitou in his arms, he turned towards the crowd who had filled his dungeon. Then, as if a moment had sufficed to restore all his self-possession: —

"The day which I had foreseen has then arrived," said he. "Thanks to you, my friends, — thanks to the eternal genius which watches over the liberty of nations!"

And he held out both his hands to the men who had assisted Billot to break down the door, and who, recognizing in him, from the dignity of his demeanor and his proud look, a man of superior genius, hardly dared to touch them.

On leaving the dungeon, he walked before all these men, leaning on Billot's shoulder, and followed by Pitou and his liberators.

The first moment had been devoted by Gilbert to friendship and to gratitude, the second had re-established the distance which existed between the learned doctor and the ignorant farmer, the warm-hearted Pitou, and the whole throng which had liberated him.

When he reached the door at the foot of the staircase Gilbert stopped, on perceiving the broad sunshine which beamed full upon him. He paused, crossing his arms over his breast and raising his eyes to heaven. "Hail to thee, lovely Liberty!" he exclaimed. "I saw thee spring to life in another world, and we are old friends. Hail to thee, lovely Liberty!"

And the smile of the doctor clearly said that the cries

he then heard of a whole people, inebriated with independence, were no new thing to him.

Then, meditating for a few seconds: —

"Billot," said he, "the people, then, have vanquished despotism?"

"Yes, sir."

"And you came here to fight?"

"I came to liberate you."

"You knew, then, of my arrest?"

"Your son informed me of it this morning."

"Poor Sebastien! Have you seen him?"

"I have seen him."

"And he remained quietly at his school?"

"I left him struggling with four of the attendants of the infirmary."

"Is he ill — has he been delirious?"

"He wanted to come with us to fight."

"Ah!" ejaculated the doctor, and a smile of triumph passed over his features. His son had proved himself to be what he had hoped.

"And what did you say to him?" inquired the doctor.

"I said, since Doctor Gilbert is in the Bastille, let us take the Bastille; and now the Bastille is taken. But that 's not all."

"What is there, then, besides?" asked the doctor.

"The casket has been stolen."

"The casket which I had confided to your care?"

"Yes."

"Stolen! and by whom?"

"By some men dressed in black, who came into my house under the pretext of seizing your pamphlets: they arrested me, locked me up in a room; they searched the house all over, found the casket, and carried it off."

"When did this happen?"

"Yesterday."

"Ho! ho! there is an evident connection between my arrest and this robbery. The person who caused my arrest, at the same time had the casket stolen. Let me but know the persons who contrived my arrest, and I shall know who it was contrived the robbery. Where are the archives of the fortress?" continued the doctor, turning to the jailer.

"In the courtyard of the government house, sir," replied the jailer.

"Then to the archives, my friends — to the archives!" cried the doctor.

"Sir," said the jailer, stopping him, "let me go with you, or speak a word in my favor to these worthy people, that no harm may happen to me."

"Be it so," said Gilbert.

Then, addressing the crowd who surrounded him, and gazed at him with curiosity mingled with respect:—

"My friends," said he, "I recommend this worthy man to you; he only fulfilled his office in opening and shutting the prison doors; but he was kind towards the prisoners. Let no injury happen to him."

"No, no!" cried the crowd with one accord, "no!— he need not fear; no harm shall be done to him. Let him come with us."

"I thank you, sir," said the jailer to the doctor; "but if you wish for anything in the archives, I advise you to move quickly, for I believe they are burning the papers."

"Oh, then there is not an instant to be lost," cried Gilbert; "to the archives!"

And he hastened towards the courtyard of the government house, followed by the crowd, at the head of which were still Billot and Pitou.

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